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IMPRESSIONS

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WANDERER

IN

ITALY, SWITZERLAND, FRANCE, AND SPAIN.

BY

T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"A SUMMER IN BRITTANY," ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE fact of the publication of the following Letters in the columns of the *Athenæum*, and perhaps also, in some degree, the reception they met with in that form from the public, have led my publisher to consider them worth reprinting; and I can only hope that others may agree in his appreciation.

As to the Letters themselves, a glance will show the reader what they are: the occasional observations and speculations of a wanderer, not travelling to write, but writing here and there on his travels—only when he *fancied*, at least, that he had something to say.

The wide extent of rambling indicated by the dates of the letters, might well have fur-

nished material sufficient to fill many a goodly volume with matter fully as amusing or interesting as any which the following pages contain. But I had other pursuits in view during most of the time over which they extend, and wrote them, as I have said, only when and where the fit took me. Nothing, therefore, can be further from my mind than any notion of presenting my jottings as a complete account of any of the places from which they are written. They may, however, amuse some readers, and they may contain some scraps of information, which it is as well to commit to the safe custody of letter-press:

Valeant quantum.

Nothing remains for me to add, but my thanks to the conductors of the *Athenæum*, both for the kindness of their intercourse with me during the course of my correspondence with them, and for their permission to reprint the present volume from their pages.

T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

Florence, June, 1850.

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LETTERS,

ETC. ETC.

I.

Venice, Sept. 29, 1847.

WHEN I promised you some account of our doings here, on occasion of the ninth meeting of the "Congresso degli Scienziati Italiani," I did not purpose sending you a detailed account of the learned proceedings of the various Sections: first, because I misdoubted your caring much about the matter,—and secondly, because fair Science occupied no large share of my own attention during the meeting. Very wrong, I admit, to join a scientific congress, and there do little more than loll in a gondola, or dream in the moonlight in the Piazza of St. Marc! But, then,

it was so pleasant! And, between ourselves, the truth is, that Science herself could not resist the influence of Venice—the true locality of the Castle of Indolence.

The result was, that the graver, sterner, and more unseducible bigwigs declared the Congress a failure. But other circumstances contributed to this effect. The political movement in Italy, begetting jealousies and fears and precautions of all sorts among the less liberal of her governments, had caused them to throw difficulties in the way of the meeting. There were no Piedmontese, few Tuscans, scarcely any Neapolitans or Romans. In some cases, the governments of these states were the prohibiting party,—in others, the Austrian government refused her *visa* to the passports of those who wished to come. A long list was sent to the Austrian resident at Florence of the names of those to whom he was to refuse the *visa*. And no doubt a similar measure was adopted with regard to the other states of the Peninsula. In short, the Congress was made up of Lombards and Germans, with a few stray English and French.

The meeting *was* said to be a failure in a

scientific point of view; and I have, therefore, conscientiously told you so. But it goes against the grain with me to admit the fact. It seems so ungrateful to the Venetian managers of the Congress,—whose arrangements were such as really to make each individual member feel as if he were the especial guest of the city. Nothing was spared to the accomplishment of this end that forethought, trouble, and munificent liberality could contribute. And it was pleasingly evident that the desire to do honour to the occasion was universal, and pervaded all classes. I was three years ago a member of the Congress which assembled at Milan: where, indeed, everything was done that the liberality of the municipality, and the care of a select few of the nobles, could effect. But I then remarked the striking manner in which the body of the Milanese *noblesse* stood aloof from all contact with the *roturier* body of *savans*. There were all the characteristics of the old pride of caste; the *morgue* of an uneducated and ignorant aristocracy, who conceived—rightly enough—that they had nothing to do with science, or any such plebeian occupations and interests. At

Venice, no feeling of the sort was to be detected. Not that I suppose more education is to be found among the Venetian nobility than among the same class at Milan. But there was no *morgue*, no holding aloof. If the descendants of the old ducal and senatorial families did not very effectively join their learned guests in scientific disquisitions, they were at least delighted to mix with them in their lighter hours, and to do them honour in every way they could devise, and show them their lovely city in its brightest and most holiday aspect. Assuredly, in this point of view, the Congress at Venice was no failure. I never passed a more delightful fortnight in my life.

I arrived there from Milan on the 10th, three days before the commencement of the Congress. Already the coming event had begun to exercise a very sensible influence on the destinies of postillions and post-horses. As the Austrian administration books as many as apply, five huge diligences composed the caravan which started from Milan for Venice on the 9th of September, 1847. We left Milan at noon, and should have arrived at

Vicenza at seven A.M. on the following morning, in time for the first train on the railway thence to Venice. However, we *and the letters* reached Vicenza too late for the first train,—too late also for the second,—and only about an hour before the departure of the third and last, at 4 30 P.M.; being nine hours and a half behind our time on a journey appointed to be accomplished in nineteen! This, too, over excellent roads and without the shadow of accident or unforeseen event of any kind! However, nobody seemed either angry, or surprised, or discontented. It was merely remarked that the horses were worn out; and the Venetian world received their English, French, and Lombard letters twenty-four hours later than their right with exemplary resignation. I did attempt, in my John Bull indignation, to excite a little discontent in the vehicle in which I was imprisoned: but nobody seemed to understand that there was anything to complain of. All seemed to think that it was merely unreasonable to require that horses evidently hardly able to drag their load at all should go faster: and when I endeavoured to lead them a little higher in the

chain of causation, and pointed out that the administration of the Posts committed a fraud in taking our money under promise of carrying us to our destination in a given time, and then failing to do so, not from unforeseen circumstances, but simply for want of spending on our transport a sufficient portion of the payment exacted from us for the purpose, they were much puzzled and rather scandalized, and evidently looked on me as men would on one who should quarrel with the heavens for raining, or with the sun for shining!

On passing from the station of the railway at Venice, two sheets of printed instructions were put into my hand, which contained information respecting the steps to be taken by those who wished to become members of the Congress—the best means of finding lodgings, the hotels, coffee-houses, dining-houses, gondola fares—and finally detailing a list of the amusements and festivities which were destined to enliven the learned guests expected during their fortnight's stay.

All this was thoughtful, attentive, and very useful. The hotels were asking fabulous prices; but by the kind assistance of a gen-

tleman specially deputed *ad hoc*, I found a good bedroom for four francs a night.

The next morning betimes, I was at the magnificent old Palace of the Doges—the head-quarters of all the business of the Congress. There I found a committee sitting from eight A. M., till ten, P. M., for the admission of members: and on my inrolment was presented with a really magnificent work on the history, topography, and statistics of Venice. It is in three enormously thick volumes, imperial 8vo; was written expressly for the occasion by a number of gentlemen, who undertook each the department with which he was especially conversant, and is got up in the handsomest possible manner with respect to paper, type, and illustration.

I had till the 13th to look about me, and amuse myself—never to me a matter of any difficulty in Venice. Our president, the Conte Giovanelli, is a very wealthy patrician, and a pleasing, gentlemanlike man. The former qualification is not one to be overlooked; as the hospitalities which he has shown to the members, their families and friends, needed a wherewithal far beyond the means of most

of the Venetian nobles of the present day. His opening speech was a sensible exposition of the aims and advantages of these "Congresses," and of the peculiar interest, in many points of view, which Venice has to offer. Certainly no city of Italy, or probably of the world, could afford so convenient and magnificent a *locale* for all the purposes of the Congress as the ancient Queen of the Adriatic. The superb, but empty, palace of her "long line of Doges" sufficed for everything, and might have accommodated a second rival congress within its walls. There were nine sections — and all were accommodated in its various magnificent chambers; while the colonnades and arcades formed promenades for those who wished to converse or lounge in the intervals of business.

The shape of our day was thus:—In the morning, breakfast in the delicious open air of the piazza at that miraculous *café*, "Florian's," which, tradition says, has never been closed for a minute for the last hundred years. Then the Sections sit between nine and three—the sitting of each lasting two hours. We stroll from Florian's to the Palace—get our *Diario*

detailing the proceedings of the previous day —take our tickets for the party we have made for that day's dinner—look at the notice stuck up of the various papers to be read in the Sections that day—reflect that we absented ourselves yesterday from the business of the morning for the sake of a row to the Lido—that after all we are members of a *scientific* congress, and not of a mere pleasure party—that it behoves us, therefore, to attend our Section to-day, and hear Professor ——'s luminous exposition of ——; then glance at the glorious light streaming in between the arches of the long colonnades of the Palace, and tracing the forms of the architecture on the scagliola floors in alternate gold and ebony —and so jilt Urania and her sisters, to go "swim in a gondola" down the Giudecca.

At half-past three, however, we punctually resume our duties as members of the learned body. That hour finds us reunited in the brilliant banqueting-room of the old Doges. A fair proportion of ladies adorn the hall; and all is Babylonian chatter of tongues, and intense clatter of knives, forks, and glasses for the next hour and a half. Then all hands to

the gondolas again. There is a *fresco*, or a *serenato*, and all the world throng the Grand Canal.

At dusk, back to the Piazza—to the illuminations, music, ices, coffee, and chat. Here we hear how that Prince Canino was suddenly sent off by the police that morning, for talking too fast and too loud, and presenting himself in the uniform of the Roman "Guardia civica;" how that a Venetian gentleman had been sent for by the police for translating Galignani into Italian to a friend, and warned not to continue so black and treasonable a practice; how that Signor Parlatori, of Florence, was expected to read an interesting paper in the botanical section the following morning—and other such matters. Then a stroll in the moonlight till the small hours are bellowed from the envious Campanile; and then, "last scene of all," home for a few hours' desperate struggle between Morpheus and the mosquitoes.

And to-morrow—*da capo*. Unless, indeed, the routine should be varied by some one of the numerous amusements which were prepared by the liberal and sedulous city for the delectation of her learned guests.

We had an excursion to Vicenza to see the "Œdipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles performed in Palladio's theatre there. It was really an ineresting sight. Pacini's music, composed for the occasion, was admitted by the *connoscenti* to be excellent, and the choruses were admirably drilled. It seemed, however, to me, that the majestic severity and colossal proportions of the Greek tragedy were dwarfed down to the stature of a modern opera. This, probably, was inevitable in such an attempt. At all events, all that was addressed to the eye was admirable; and the architecture of Palladio, seen by the light of a thousand wax lights, produced an effect, of which those can have no idea who have viewed it only by an imperfect and scanty daylight.

Then there were balls and serenades, illuminations of the Fenice, and a regatta; a horticultural exhibition in the Botanical Garden at Padua; and, finally, an excursion to Pola, in a steamer provided by the city, to visit the celebrated Roman remains there.

Of the business part of the meeting, I have promised to spare you all detail. But I may just mention, that the most important topics

of discussion were the breeding and management of the silkworm, and the project of ameliorating the vineyards and vines of Italy. Some important communications were made on the former subject. As to the latter, it seems that a whole host of inveterate prejudices and bad habits have to be battled against before any improvement can be hoped for. Every process in the production of wine in Italy is faulty, from the planting of the vine to the bottling of the product. From the husbandman to the cellarman, all must abandon their traditional practices, and adopt new ones.

In conclusion, what shall we say of the Ninth Congress of the Scienziati of Italy? It is indubitable that the present political movement in Italy thinned the ranks, and kept away many who were much missed, and who contributed to the *éclat* of former meetings. But nobody can think that Venice has failed in showing herself, at the least, as eager to do honour to Science, as munificent in the cause, and as hospitable to its representatives, as any one of her predecessors. Perhaps, of all the nine meetings which have taken place, it was,

in a social point of view, the most enjoyable; and, for my own part, it will be long before I cease to remember with pleasure the fortnight which I passed in Venice in 1847.

LETTER II.

THE NEW BIRTHDAY OF ROME.

Rome, Nov. 16.

It is long since the Eternal City has seen so memorable a day as yesterday,—the day appointed for the meeting of the newly instituted Council; and I think that some account of our doings here on the occasion may interest you. It is perhaps hardly necessary to remind you that Pius the Ninth, some time since, determined on instituting a Council of State, to consist of twenty-four members summoned from the different towns of the pontifical dominions. These he was to name himself,—and they were to name their successors. There is a very wide distance between this scheme and a system of representation:—and

this distance is that which first presents itself to an English eye. But the difference between such an institution and the state of things which preceded it is far greater:—and this is what chiefly strikes the eye of an Italian. In truth, the astonishment of the Roman world seems almost as great as its exultation. A senate once more sits among them!—It is like the return of life to the shrivelled form of a mummy!

But startling and strange as is the phenomenon, the citizens of Rome have fully appreciated its importance. Nay, more! they have at once felt that the measure can be no "*final*" one,—that it is but the end of the wedge,—and it is the germ of a complete representative system. They look forward to having, ere many years shall have passed, members not only *from* but *for* their towns and provinces sitting in Parliament at Rome. In truth, those who will project their speculations into the coming time, and measure the value of events by that of the consequences which they are calculated to bring about, must feel that it is almost impossible to exaggerate the magnitude of that which took place

here on the 15th of November:—a day, if we mistake not, which will be held dear to memory hereafter, when many another anniversary, now religiously kept, shall be forgotten.

All Rome had been in a state of considerable excitement,—planning processions and demonstrations, &c., to do honour to the coming event for some days previously. Everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation. At length the fateful morning came:—and soon after sunrise all Rome was in the streets. The deputies were to be received by His Holiness at the palace on the Quirinal; and were then to proceed in great state, and escorted by a grand procession, to St. Peter's, there to hear mass,—and thence, to take possession of the chamber assigned to them in the Vatican. I should much have preferred that their place of sitting had been the Capitol. This little improvement, however, may easily accompany greater ones by-and-bye. The deputies were received by the Pope in the Palace; and were harangued by him in a speech of which the pith was that they were to do all that their instructions bade them, *and no more*,—mere

words of course, understood by those who heard them, and very possibly even by him who spoke them, to mean but little. In the meantime, the procession formed itself in the piazza in front of the palace,—that magnificent Monte Cavallo, one of the finest spots of modern Rome. Twenty-four state carriages were lent by the principal nobles of Rome for the purpose of conveying the four-and-twenty deputies. Each carriage was preceded by a military band, and followed by a party of citizens from the town of each member,—three of whom bore standards with the arms of the town, its name, and the name of its deputy. The whole procession was escorted by a very handsomely equipped and altogether creditable looking body of the national guard. *Civic* guard, by-the-bye, it would be more correct to call them; but I observe the Romans much affect to style them *Nazionali.*

For the sake of those who know Rome, it may be interesting to mention that the line of march through the city from Monte Cavallo to the Vatican was by the Tre Cannelli, the Via di S. Romualdo, the Corso, the Via della Fontanella di Borghese, the Via dell' Orso,

across the bridge of St. Angelo, and so by the Borgo Nuovo, to St Peter's.

The whole line was profusely decorated in the manner so familiar to those acquainted with continental ways and customs, and so strange to Englishmen who see it for the first time. Every window along the line had drapery hanging from it, of material more or less splendid and more or less fresh in condition. A very large display of tapestry also ornamented many of the walls. Yellow sand strewn along the whole distance hid from the eye for a while the usual filth of Roman streets; and at every few yards huge banners were suspended on wreaths of evergreens across the street, bearing pithy and significative inscriptions expressive of the expectations of the people with regard to the new Council who were passing under them to their first meeting.

These banners and their legends were perhaps the most remarkable thing connected with the day. They were selected, prepared, and hung up without any reference to, or communication with, the authorities whatsoever:— of itself a fact sufficiently remarkable in a city

accustomed, time out of mind, to be governed as Rome has been. A circumstance curiously indicative of inconsistency on the part of the government, as it would seem to our notions, occurred with regard to these inscriptions. On the following morning appeared a printed sheet, sold about the streets, containing the collection of them, — from which one, and one line of another, had been erased by the Censorship. And yet the flags bearing the obnoxious words were permitted to continue hanging before the eyes of the citizens all the following day,—while the hiatus marked with points in the paper, which was in everybody's hand, of course served to direct attention especially to the inscriptions thus stigmatised. The first two lines of that which the Censorship altogether erased from the printed sheet were—

Difformità di culto
Non importi civile servitu.

("Let not difference of religion involve civil inequality"); and the remainder was only an expansion of the same sentiment. It is one, it must be confessed, which few of this generation could have dared hope to see pub-

licly expressed in Rome. The other legend bade the Council "open to the daring minds of all the sons of Italy all the fountains of the arts and sciences, and never fail to remember that intellect is power." From this the Censor erased the words "*of all the sons of Italy*." This of course was to avoid giving offence to Austria.

Another runs thus—"Let your speech be as bold as our hopes are, and your counsels great as are the needs of the people."

Another: "Oh Counsellors! give us light by instruction—bread by commerce—strength by arms. Be the palladium of our rights—the glory of the nation!"

Not a few recal to the remembrance of the new deputies the connexion between privileges and responsibilities—warn them that all eyes will be on them—remind them that their conduct will have to undergo a rigorous examination—that a day of severe reckoning awaits them—and hint that "unfruitful boughs will be lopped from the tree of state, and replaced by better grafts"—with other similarly expressive words of warning.

Well! beneath all these sententious saws,

and between closely-packed masses of fellow-citizens and tall houses, every window of which was filled with gazing faces, but all as silent as the grave, the four-and-twenty senators wound onward in the four-and-twenty gala coaches; most of them looking anxious and excited, and some nervous and agitated enough. Had it not been for the military bands, the procession might have been deemed that of a funeral, so deadly still, so depressingly silent, were the vast multitudes who thronged the streets.

At length, some two hours after it had left the Quirinal, the head of the procession reached the piazza in front of St. Peter's; and another hour had elapsed before the last deputy and his attendant *cortège* had entered the great gates of the church. The scene in the piazza was really a very striking one. The immense space was well filled with a living mass of anxious and excited, though silent, people; through which the procession wound its slow way, and showed its gay banners and armorial standards, &c., to great advantage as it ascended the vast steps of the church, which were also converted into a living bank of

intent faces glistening with thousands of eager eyes. The sombre walls of the colossal Vatican, which overhang the piazza, and from their proud height appear almost to look down upon the mighty church itself, might have seemed to an imaginative spectator to frown upon the unwonted scene, fraught with a meaning well calculated to dismay the spirits of the former lords of that haughty palace if they yet haunt the abode of their earthly greatness. The long, semi-circular porticoes which, stretching forward on either side from the front of the church, embrace the piazza, might, on the other hand, have been seen by fancy as the outstretched arms of Mother Church welcoming the champions of progress and reform, and *once more* eager to draw to her bosom the leaders of the popular cause.

As soon as the close of the procession had entered the church, the crowd rushed in through the four vast doors all thrown open. Nothing ever gave me so striking an idea of the vast space of the huge fabric as the wonderful manner in which the multitudes seemed literally to be absorbed by the mighty building. The thousands poured in, circulated

freely, and yet there was space to spare. At the eastern altar a mass was celebrated with the music of the military bands which had accompanied the procession. The music to critical ears was, I dare say, not first rate; but the effect of it on minds excited by the nature of the occasion, and by the associations of the place as connected with the ideas belonging to that occasion, was something very grand; indeed, quite overpowering. The colossal statues of departed pontiffs, the tyrants of the Church and of mankind, sat around and seemed to gaze from their marble tombs upon the scene. The mind rushed back in rapid review of all that they had done for the shackling and binding down of man's soul and body—all the skilful policy, the cunningly combined doctrines and pretensions, the success which during long ages had attended their efforts, and glowed with exultation at the thought that the joyous trumpet-blast then ringing through those mighty vaults was proclaiming to the world—there in the very citadel of their power, the downfall of their system, the departure of the sceptre from their hands, and the birth of a new era in which

Church and churchmen must resume their due position, and if they will not contribute to, at least not impede, the civilization of mankind!

Pius the Ninth is an excellent man. But he is a Pope; and he little dreams—at least if his secret thoughts and his public words at all agree—that consequences such as I have been alluding to are involved in the new institutions which he has been creating. But Rome understands them otherwise, thinks otherwise, *means* otherwise. The speech which Pius made to his new counsellors has been in part published since I began this letter, and has given great satisfaction. He tells the deputies that he has not the slightest intention of lessening the power of the Pontifical sovereignty, which he considers himself "bound to hand down to his successors whole and unimpaired as he received it from God and his predecessors." He tells them that "those are greatly deceived who fancy that the duties of the new Council are aught beyond giving an opinion when asked for;" and that they are "greatly deluded who see in it a realization of their own Utopias and the

germs of an institution incompatible with the papal sovereignty."

The Holy Father may *intend* to hand down the despotic power wielded by his predecessors in the chair of St. Peter whole and entire. But were he to die to-morrow—which heaven forbid!—and were his successor to be the most furious "*oscurantista*," the stoutest champion of the "good old times" and of despotic power that the sacred college could furnish, he would find the papal power transmitted to him by no means "whole and entire," but clipped, hedged-in, and bounded in every direction. A progress has been already made, which it is impossible to retrace. To advance or to fall is henceforward the only alternative left to the occupier of St. Peter's chair. The words which I have quoted from his Holiness's speech to the deputies are calculated to do harm: and if the Censor's duty be to prohibit the publication of aught which has a tendency to disturb the public tranquillity he ought to have expunged those passages of the sovereign's address.

Another circumstance, of less importance, connected with the rejoicings of the day, had

much discontented the citizens, and was the cause of that dead silence to which I have adverted. It had been intended that all the foreign nations in Rome should take part in the procession, each marching under its own flag. It seems that the Lombards and the Neapolitans had determined on marching with their flag furled and craped, in token of mourning for the political condition of their respective countries. It is said also that it was intended by the Romans to receive the other foreign flags, and especially that of England, with applause; while that of France was to have been suffered to pass in utter silence, in token of the dissatisfaction of the Italians at the conduct of the French government towards Italy. These circumstances induced the Austrian, French, and Neapolitan ambassadors to apply to the papal government to prevent any such exhibition of feeling. And the result was, the prohibition of all participation by foreign nations in the business of the day.

The rejoicings concluded with an illumination, and a ball at the Apollo Theatre; of which all the expenses were very munificently

defrayed by Torlonia, while the receipts, about 1200 crowns, were given to the newly established Infant Asylum,—an excellent institution which, incredible as it may appear, was actually prohibited in Rome under the late Pope!

LETTER III.

Rome, January 5.

A CIRCUMSTANCE has just occurred here which has caused no small excitement in the public mind—for even here a public mind begins to exist; and which, as curiously indicative of the march of social progress, may be worth communicating to you. There has existed in Rome since the 12th of last May a sort of club of a kind hitherto not tolerated by the governments of Italy. In most of the cities of the peninsula was found a "Casino dei nobili,"—a re-union confined rigorously to the nobles, and devoted to billiards, cards, lounging, and an occasional ball given in the Carnival. But in Rome not even this was permitted. There was no point or means of public meeting whatever. When, therefore,

in obedience to the new spirit presiding over Roman affairs and destinies, on the 12th of last May, a club constituted on liberal principles and with rational objects was formed with the permission of the government, the innovation was great and the step in advance a notable one. The new club was styled the "Circolo Romano:"—its leading feature of novelty, as compared with the usual casino of the other Italian cities, was the admissibility of all ranks. Any man is eligible,—and the present list of the society embraces men of all classes. But a scarcely less important novelty was the addition of a reading-room. A mere lounging-place might do for uneducated *far-niente* nobles dreadfully put to it for some means of getting through the day; but more solid and rational means of attraction and amusement were necessary for the body of the professional and mercantile classes—sadly behind-hand in instruction and civilization as these, too, must be admitted to be. The result has been that the reading-room, well furnished with the newspapers of all nations, has become the principal feature of the establishment; and has made the "Circolo" a most important

instrument of social progress and a school for the formation of public political opinion.

The rooms occupied by the society are the *primo piano* of a palace in the Corso, exactly opposite the Palazzo Ruspoli, well known as the *locale* of the Caffè Nuovo. The number of members at present is between three and four hundred: and among them are the Princes Doria and Borghese, and others belonging to the leading noble families of Rome. This I mention as a proof that the noblesse have not, as might possibly have been anticipated, held themselves aloof from this unexclusive and mixed society. Strangers are admitted to the enjoyment of all the advantages of membership in a very liberal manner on the presentation of any member. The card of invitation received by a stranger states that "the President having been informed by such a member of the high qualities of Mr. So-and-so, begs him to make use of the rooms of the Society at his pleasure, and to avail himself of whatever conveniences they may offer." Now, the officers in whom the government of this society is vested are elected by the members annually; and the startling fact which was

the especial inducement to me to write the present letter occurred at the election which took place at the close of last year. A certain number of councillors are chosen by the votes of the members:—and he of the new council who had the greatest number was A JEW!

They who have some knowledge of Rome, not regarded as a mere museum but as a city of living men—they who know anything of its social habits, prejudices, manners and ways of thinking—will be able to appreciate the magnitude and startling nature of this fact. I was looking the other day at a band of children marching two and two through the streets in the uniform of the Guardia Civica, with an "S" in their caps for "Speranza" to denote that they are the hope of their country. They were, in fact, a sort of Guardia Civica seminary; and two lads were pointed out to me, of whom one was the son of the Prince Canino and great-nephew of the Emperor Napoleon, and the other the son of Ciceruachio, the hay-dealer, whose name has lately become so well known. The band of boys were returning from their exercises in the Barberini Gardens; and the two lads whom I have men-

tioned were marching most fraternally side by side, and chattering as if there were no such thing as social distinctions in the world. And this was pointed out to me as a most notable instance of liberalism and proof of the progress of opinion. And pretty enough it was to see the young defenders of the future liberties of their country thus learning to unite themselves in her cause—prince and peasant alike feeling that cause to be their own. But what is that as a triumph over inveterate prejudices compared to the fact before related? What a mass of misconception and ignorance—what a rank growth of old hatreds carefully inculcated and fomented through centuries in the breasts of successive generations—must have given way and disappeared before the dawning light ere such a phenomenon could have been witnessed! And it is to be noted that no special circumstances led to the election of the gentleman in question. He is a very fit and proper person:—but the reason for his election was his faith. The Jew was chosen *because* he was a Jew—because the more enlightened Romans of 1848 were determined to mark their adhesion to the great principle that reli-

gious faith ought in nowise to influence a man's social or political station.—Strange, indeed, would it be if, while this truth is affirmed in Rome, it should be practically denied by a British House of Commons. It is difficult to believe that England should have to receive a lesson on such a subject from Rome. Yet there will not be wanting worthy gentlemen who, in the coming debate on this principle in our legislature, will strive—vainly it is to be hoped—to consecrate a prejudice obsolete even in the immemorial head-quarters of bigotry, exclusiveness, and intolerance.

Few are aware how thorny, how obstructed, how almost desperately difficult is the path of improvement at Rome. Few are aware how great and all but insuperable are the difficulties of the course which Pio Nono has marked out for himself. It might be supposed from the very considerable number of English every winter resident in Rome, that a tolerably accurate knowledge of the social position and political condition of Rome would not be uncommon among us. But the reverse is most remarkably the case. The fact is, our countrymen visit the Eternal City for the most

part solely as a museum. They acquaint themselves with its antiquities,—study its marbles, pictures, churches,—bask in its sun; but as a living city of nineteenth-century men they know little or nothing of it. Of its government, its resources, its institutions, its finances, its establishments, legal, clerical, governmental, they have far less knowledge than of those of any other European state. It must be admitted that accurate information on all these subjects is peculiarly difficult of attainment at Rome. The Papal States are more devoid of printed information on such matters than it is possible to conceive. Would it be believed,—to instance a very simple matter—that there does not exist a tolerably good map of the city of Rome,—that the best is still that of Nolli, which was executed before the construction of the Piazza del Popolo; that there does not exist any tolerable map of the States of the Church—that the best, from which the recent plans for the proposed railways were laid down, is one dedicated to Pope Benedict the Fourteenth, who died in 1758!

The general idea, indeed, is that all administration and civil and social polity is bad at

Rome,—but few have known *how* bad. Few have any adequate idea of the universal corruption spread through every department, pervading and holding together officials high and low as with one huge net—from whose all-embracing folds it is next to impossible to extricate any portion of the public machine. It is impossible to name the most palpable, gross, evident, and apparently simple-remedied abuse, nuisance, or mal-practice, but that if inquired into it turns out to be continued and tolerated because it is, perhaps in some inconceivably indirect manner, profitable to some *one* at the cost of the many.

Then, the very close connexion between Church and State—or rather their identification—leads to a condition of things which admits of almost every abuse being more or less placed under the sheltering protection of religion. We know ourselves, alas! right well the potency of the cry of 'Church in Danger!'—and the uses to which it may be turned. But at Rome a proposal to cleanse the filth of some sewerless alley may place the Church in danger, very possibly. The cry shrieked from the gaping throats of a hundred

corruption-fattened dignitaries meets and scares the reformer at every turn. And this is a species of impediment which especially clogs the path of the excellent and well-meaning Pontiff.

Pio Nono is an admirable prince—a resolute, large-hearted, upright and courageous man, so far as this world's dangers are concerned. But he is, it seems, a man of a timorous—and, it is to be feared, not enlightened—conscience. His first impulse is ever towards good: but there are those about him who find the means of perpetually alarming his conscience by representing measures which would be for the benefit of mankind as hostile to the interests of religion. Two events occurred here the other day, almost contemporaneously, which warn us that, in proverbial phrase, we are "not out of the wood yet,"—and which speak of Rome as it was, its ways and manners, as forcibly as the incident with which I began my letter tells of Rome as it is about to be.

The one was a miracle. A sick girl, epileptic (the old story) fell into a state of ecstasy; and therein foretold that an aunt of hers, who was ill, would not recover—but that she herself

should recover on a certain day. Both prophecies were accurately fulfilled. These circumstances I believe to be strictly true. I had a good deal of conversation with the celebrated Orioli (recently, by-the-by, recalled from his banishment at Corfu, and appointed to the chair of History at the Sapienza) upon the subject. He had inquired into the facts —and believed them to be correctly stated. But he explained them in his own fashion; considering the case to be one of *clairvoyance* induced by "spontaneous mesmerism" — a phenomenon which he asserted to be, in his opinion, by no means rare. Be this as it may, the girl on coming out of her ecstatical condition declared—whether spontaneously or by suggestion is not clear—that she had been favoured with a vision; that a certain Madonna —she of Loretto I believe—had appeared to her, and communicated to her the facts which she had foretold. The miracle was recognised by the clergy. The Madonna in question was carried through the streets in triumph; and processions were formed and services chanted on the occasion.

The other occurrence was a simpler one.

A man was stabbed dead in the Piazza Colonna, the most central and frequented spot of all Rome, and there left to lie till the morning sun shone upon the corpse in the midst of the busy city. The body was then carried away to the dead-house—the bystanders said "Poverino!"—and there was an end of that. A sad sight in the midst of a civilized community; yet to my eye not *so* sad as the companion occurrence which I have related above. Saddest of all is the irresistible conclusion, which all must come to who know this country, that these two events may be considered as throwing light on each other—that they are connected by the relationship of cause and effect. Where events of the one sort are to be found, there deeds of the other will not be wanting.

I am quite sure that in writing this I am biassed by no partisan or sectarian spirit, or "odium theologicum." I speak of the matter solely in a lay and sócial point of view, without any reference whatever to doctrinal disputes or theological opinions. Nor am I speaking at all of Catholicism, or Romanism, call it as you will, in general. The religion

practised under this name in the North of Europe is a very different thing from that of the South, however identical the professed doctrines may be. The religion of a people, as every other portion of their social existence and moral nature, is modified by their temperament. Marriage, for instance, is doctrinally the same thing in the North as in the South; but in practice, in feeling, and in fact, it is a very different institution.

I am straying into a subject far too large for such a letter as this,—and perchance exposing myself to a "ne sutor ultra crepidam." But the two occurrences above related led me to reflect on the utter disjunction of religion, as practised here, from moral restraint. I could write a volume full of facts — some minutely small, some strikingly large — all tending to prove that the Paganism of old Rome is far from extinct in its former haunts, and that the peculiar dogmas of Christianity as taught at Rome tend to produce, rather than to repress, crime, by providing and pointing out easy methods of ridding the conscience of the sting which crime produces. Perhaps I *would* write such a volume, if I

thought that I could persuade the world to believe that I wrote as a social observer only, not as a religious controversialist.

And now—to finish my letter, as I began it, with a *pleasant* fact—I may mention that I dined a day or two since with a party of the leading members of the new Consulta, assembled round the hospitable board of a distinguished countryman of our own; where the conversation, carried on in Italian before a variety of strange servants, and without any precaution whatever, was as completely free, as wholly unrestrained in its disquisitions on government, men and measures, and as severe in its strictures, as could have been the case in London or Paris. *This* would have been wholly out of the question two years since.

LETTER IV.

Rome, March 15.

I HAVE just returned from Monte Cavallo, whither I betook myself at five o'clock this afternoon, for the purpose of witnessing the Papal benediction bestowed from the great window of the Quirinal Palace. Englishmen at Rome are far too numerous, and Papal benedictions too common, for me to dream of entertaining you with a description of so well-known a ceremony for the sake of its intrinsic interest. But if benedictions be common, the occasion of that bestowed to-day was at least sufficiently rare and novel to afford matter of interest to the whole of Europe.

The Eternal City was this morning presented with a constitution providing for a complete representative system of government.

The Pope is no longer an absolute monarch. This consummation has been no doubt somewhat precipitated by the late events in France: but it has been for some months past one of those coming events which cast shadows before. When the excellent Pius established the "Consulta," he told its members, as we know, that "they were greatly mistaken who saw in it the germ of any institutions incompatible with the entirety of the Pontifical sway and power;" and that he would "hand down, as he was bound to do, that power whole and undiminished to his successors, as he had received it from his predecessors." His Holiness's subjects, as you also know, took a very different view of the matter. I then told you that the deed that day accomplished by his Holiness already made it impossible for him to hand down his sway such as he received it; that the institution then established contained the germ of a representative system, which in due time it would infallibly bring forth. That the hour of birth was so near at hand, I certainly did not anticipate.

Rome has been for some days past in a

state of considerable agitation and uneasiness. Great fears have been entertained of a serious outbreak of popular discontent. Precautions of all sorts have been taken. Dragoons and civic guards have constantly patrolled the streets in all directions. But it is probable that nothing but the strong feeling of personal respect and affection for Pius the Ninth which pervades every class really availed to keep all quiet. The Jesuits are well known to be the especial object of the popular anger and hatred; and these worthy fathers are about to depart hence,—moved thereto, as is thought, by a word of advice from a quarter whence it could not be neglected. But if the people have been uneasy, their rulers, it may be safely asserted, have been no less so, though their throes are less patent to the vulgar eye. To the body of the Sacred College, the transfer of power from their own hands to those of a lay popular assembly appears at once an impiety, a humiliation, and an imprudence, akin to that of intrusting a powder magazine to the care of a drunken man with a firebrand in his hand. For several days after it had been promised, Rome had to wait in an agony

of expectation and anxiety for its constitution. An address from the Pontiff came forth imploring patience, and begging for a little time. "Every one," he says, "must understand the great difficulty that presents itself to him who unites two great dignities, in the task of tracing the precise line which ought to separate one power from the other. That which in a secular government can be done in a night, can be accomplished in the pontifical government only after mature consideration. I flatter myself, however, that within a few days I shall be in a position, having completed this labour, to announce a result which I trust will give satisfaction to all persons of sense and understanding."

On the strength of this assurance, Rome consented to defer burning down the Jesuits' Convent and throwing the cardinals into the Tiber;—which latter measure had been openly threatened at the masked ball that takes place on the last night of Carnival. Accordingly, this morning the citizens earliest stirring found the programme of the Papal constitution placarded on the walls. Knots of anxious faces, peering under the hats and over the

shoulders of each other, were quickly gathered before each copy of the all-important document; and in the more thickly frequented parts of the city it was read aloud for the benefit of those who could either not themselves read, or not shoulder for themselves a place within eyesight of the printed sheet.

My own first feeling, on hurriedly running my eye over the principal provisions, was that they contained certain clauses calculated to render the whole thing nugatory,—and that these must needs prevent the excited city from accepting a boon which, as it seems to me, is clearly adapted to "keep the word of promise to the ear but break it to the hope." Thus, it is provided that the chambers shall have no power to discuss any ecclesiastical *or mixed* subjects. Now, those who have any knowledge of the history of the Church, and will cast their eye back over the long story of the encroachments of ecclesiastical courts and tribunals, will know how to appreciate the value of this reservation of "*mixed*" affairs. They will know that there are but few—and those among the lower—interests of human social life and affairs which may not be shown to

have some bearing on ecclesiastical rights, duties, officers, or sanctions. Then, again, according to an Englishman's ideas, a radical and fatal misconception of civil polity and constitutional government is involved in the notion of determining beforehand in any respect what the country and sovereign in parliament assembled shall, or shall not, do. It is necessary that it should be understood that such parliament is omnipotent, and knows no human laws but such as are of its own imposing, and those depending on its own pleasure for their existence from day to day. To complete the unsatisfactory nature of the document and the exposure of the ignorance and incompetence of its composers, it includes a provision that it shall not be competent for the chamber to discuss any proposition tending to the alteration or modification of this fundamental statute. The old attempt—but sadly out of date in the year of grace 1848! It might have been supposed that even Rome had by this time heard of the discovery made by civilized mankind, that a live, working, legislating generation will not submit to have its hands tied by the ligaments which its pre-

decessors may have prepared for it. There is one other clause which, in its naïve simplicity, would seem perfectly amusing to an English House of Commons. It is declared that all funds required for the payment of the Sacred College of Cardinals, the ecclesiastical congregations, &c., amounting to a sum of 600,000 crowns annually, shall be paid to the Pope's major domo, without control, discussion, or inquiry of any kind! Very snug and comfortable indeed! The Sacred College of Cardinals, like Major Bagstock in "Dombey and Son," are "sly, sir—devilish sly!" It remains to be seen whether Rome's modern senate will have acuteness enough to outwit cunning so profound.

These are the considerations which I should have felt myself bound to lay before his Holiness if he had thought proper to ask me why I did not toss up my hat with the rest on Monte Cavallo this afternoon. Unfortunately, however, no such demand was made. My silent protest was disregarded amid the apparently unanimous approbation of the Roman citizens. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs, the men cried "Evviva!" and tossed

up their hats; the drums rattled, and the civic guard, of whom a great number were present under arms, and in *grande tenue*, raised simultaneously their red-horse-hair-streaming helmets on the ends of their bayonets—a manœuvre which, executed suddenly by a body of some thousands all together, produced the strangest effect imaginable. The Pope blessed us all with his peculiarly beautiful smile, and inimitably graceful action and impressive manner; and the Roman world dispersed to illuminate their houses, and dream of being "great, glorious, and free."

A great part of the philosophy of life, the moralists tell us, lies in the observation of its contrasts: if so, the Eternal City affords assuredly, just at present, a very fertile field to philosophers. Take the following pendant picture to that which I have just been sketching, for example. It is rarely, I should think, that the past and the present—that two widely separated centuries I may say—are so strangely placed face to face. Among the various government notices which adorn the walls of the town—for placarding is the recognised means of communication between the government and

the citizens—appears a huge sheet purporting to emanate from the chapter of the Basilic of St. Peter. Crowded between the promise of a constitutional *régime* and an address to the Guardia Civica, or jostling an advertisement of a new paper on one side, and the announcement of a railway company on the other, this lengthy document sets forth, in terms of the most moving distress and profound grief, the lamentable fact of the loss of the head of St. Andrew! This invaluable relic, it seems, has been stolen from the place in St. Peter's where it has been preserved for so many years. And there is an "Et tu, Brute" consideration about it, which hits poor Mother Church cruelly hard. For, from the nature of the place where the thing was kept, and the precautions adopted for its safe keeping, it would seem that the thief must necessarily have been one of the ecclesiastical body attached to the church. Those who have been at Rome, will remember the four colossal statues at the feet of the four piers of the cupola, and the four "loggie" or balconies above them. One of these statues is that of St. Andrew; and in the chamber behind the loggia over it was pre-

served the saint's original head. It is almost needless to observe, that relics are scarcely stolen now-a-days for their holiness, as in the days of Henry III. of France; and that St. Andrew, like some others, has lost his head in consequence of the crown it wore—a crown composed of gold and jewels to an immense amount in value.

It was impossible not to be struck with the ludicrous nature of this loss, as the eye fell on the statement of it, when intent on looking for the important announcements that are daily chronicling the steps of a nation's progress towards freedom. Nor were the lamentations of the worthy canons, it must be confessed, calculated to produce a more sympathising frame of mind. The style of these irresistibly suggested the recollection of those of poor "Kitty of Coleraine," in the old song, for her lost pitcher:—

> 'Twas the pride of my dairy,—
> Sure, sure, such a pitcher I'll ne'er see again!'

The document offers a reward of 500 scudi, more than 100*l.*—a very large sum for such a purpose in this country—for the recovery of the treasure; *with its ornaments*, I presume is

understood—though nothing is said to this effect. It concludes with a statement of the intention of the chapter to offer up a "*triduo*" —*i.e.* extra repetitions of litanies for the space of three days,—with a view of appeasing God (*placare Iddio*) and conjuring the misfortunes with which his wrath on account of the abduction of St. Andrew's head might be expected to afflict the city!—The grim old church figure amid all the new lights! Here is a numerous body of educated men asserting their belief that the Supreme Being may be expected to manifest anger for a certain special theft above what he would feel at any other crime of a similar nature,—that this anger would be manifested by inflicting evil, not on the thief, but on the innocent citizens in blind indiscriminate vengeance,—and that this vengeance might be averted by a certain amount of reiterated repetitions of a given form of words!

To complete my story, however—and therein to complete the idea of Rome and its population deducible from it,—I must tell you the sequel. Yesterday, which was a day or two after the public announcement of the loss, it

was reported that this missing treasure had been recovered. The history of its restoration was this,—and was eagerly circulated from mouth to mouth among the populace. A boat navigating the Tiber had received on board a sack filled apparently with rags, addressed to a certain point on its course. But, strange to tell, all the efforts of the boatmen were unavailing to force forward their bark an inch! For two days was the struggle continued in vain; till at length the men, *naturally guessing* (since the guess was natural, I cannot think how they were so very long in arriving at it) that it must be something connected with the nature of the cargo which prevented the boat from moving, searched every packet on board, and in the midst of the sack of rags found St. Andrew's head! Now, whether or not the head has been found at all—whether the good canons may choose to supply its place, and give out that it has been recovered—or whether it may be really the case that boatmen carrying off the stolen goods were tempted by the reward of 500 scudi, and invented the above story to account for their discovery of the treasure on board their boat—I cannot

say. Nor is there much interest in knowing how the fact may be. The gist of the story consists in the circumstance that such a tale is current and credited at Rome in the year 1848;—in the ever-fresh serviceability of the old legend, coming up as good as new, and just as capable of satisfactorily explaining such facts as it was first invented to explain hundreds of years ago!

I intended, before concluding this letter, to have given you some account of the newly-created Roman periodical press, but the name of Roman newspapers in these days is Legion. Scarcely a week passes without the establishment of a new daily or bi-weekly journal; and there is not one among them so deserving of detailed notice as the Florence *Patria*, or likely to play so important a part in the formation of a public mind in Italy, and the education of the people in constitutional principles.

The *Bilancia* and the *Contemporaneo* may be cited as most entitled to the appellation of "leading journals." The first is known as the advocate of the more moderate shade of liberal principles. It was admitted into the

kingdom of Naples when none other of the Roman journals were; and owes perhaps, in a great measure, to this privilege, the superiority of its circulation over that of any of its contemporaries. It was a few months since edited by Signori Cattebeni, Mazio, and the celebrated Professor Orioli. The latter has, however, abandoned his connexion with periodical literature to devote himself to the duties of the professional chair of modern history, which he holds at the "Sapienza." The *Contemporaneo* was one of the first—I believe the first paper—which started on the advent of the new order of things heralded by the accession of Pius IX. It is conducted with much vigour and ability, by Signori Masi and Sterbini; and exercises a greater influence in Rome probably than any of its contemporaries. Its circulation is the greatest after that of the *Bilancia*. It is the largest sheet published in Italy, except the *Mondo Illustrato* of Turin, and nearly equals in size the *Constitutionnel*, or any of the largest French papers. Its principles are strongly but constitutionally liberal. It was in the columns of the *Contemporaneo* that Signor Paradisi

made the attack on the tobacco and salt revenues administration by Torlonia which caused so great a sensation here some two or three months since. That wealthy and powerful family were urgent with the government to stop the mouth of the writer by the old arbitrary means:—the reply of the authorities was the appointment of Signor Paradisi to a newly-created office of statistical examiner of the administrations, with authority to overhaul all accounts and call for all documents. The surprise of Rome and the anger of the Torlonias were great, and much was expected from the new commission. Meantime, however, Torlonia brought an action before the ordinary tribunals against his accuser for libel. Signor Paradisi was found to have stated things not accurately true, — although it would seem that he had innocently fallen into error; and a sentence of the court put him and his commission out of sight and memory. The government, nevertheless, had certainly given a very striking proof of its adoption of the principle of free discussion.

After the two leading papers that I have mentioned, may be cited the *Italico*, the

Speranza, the *Commercio*, the *Pallade*, the *Unione*, the *Indicatore*, the *Epoca*, the *Capitole*, and the *Sentinello di Tevere*,—all professing liberal principles, and advocating them with more or less talent. But it is hardly to be supposed possible that the Roman States can support a dozen or more of daily papers, besides others in the provinces—especially at Bologna, where the *Felsineo* has long since established for itself an Italian reputation as an enlightened advocate of moderate constitutional principles.

The new constitution provides for the total abolition of the censorship, except in the case of writings on religious subjects. We may therefore expect—if we cannot hope for commercial success for all these over-numerous speculations—that at all events a vigorous and useful school of public writers will be formed as successors to the emasculated tribe of word-stringers who have rendered Italian literature, for the last hundred years, synonymous with slip-slop.

LETTER V.

Florence, Feb. 11.

I HAVE just returned from hearing a *Te Deum* celebrated at the Cathedral in honour of the establishment of the representative system of government in the Sardinian dominions. The enthusiasm of the Florentines upon the occasion was infinitely increased by the appearance on the same morning of a sovereign decree, or "motu proprio," as it is called here, in right despotic style, promising the same to the Tuscans in a few days. Everyone is in an effervescence of joy and thankfulness. A few timid croakers shake their heads and inquire, "What will Austria say to it all?" But the general notion is, that she will, in the words of a somewhat vulgar proverb, need all her breath to cool her own porridge,—which is, in

truth, becoming desperately hot in Lombardy. Meanwhile, we have now all the rest of Italy, with the exception of the realms ruled by those mighty potentates the Dukes of Modena and Parma, quietly and peaceably—if we overlook a little bloodshed in Palermo—revolutionized and set free. At least, it must be felt that Charles I. and Louis XVI. have not died in vain.

The ceremony this afternoon at the Cathedral was really very "effective"—to use a term borrowed from the language of the theatre, which is that ordinarily most adapted to demonstrations of this sort. A certain quantum of warm-blooded enthusiasm is needed to save such exhibitions from degenerating into *mere* ceremonial, — empty sentiment and mock-heroics. But really, the genuine excitement of the vast mass of the people, who literally crammed the immense church on this occasion, could not fail to communicate its warmth to the most phlegmatic. And when the united voices of the assembled thousands made the sombre old vaults ring again with the chant which expressed the sentiments of the citizens spontaneously con-

gregated for the manifestation of their own free opinions, the mind could hardly fail to travel back to the old days of the republic and the sturdy independence of that vigorous race whose character and social system have so indelibly stamped their impress on the civic and domestic architecture of the fair city. At the conclusion of the ecclesiastical service, a military band stationed under the huge dome—the largest in the world, being some few feet in diameter more than that of St. Peter's at Rome — struck up a quick march. Again, though such sounds may have seemed incongruous with the nature of the place, the effect was undeniably fine; and the glad burst of a people's joyousness for so righteous a cause must have sent the blood in a warmer gush to the cheeks of every person there.

I could not write from Florence at this conjuncture without telling you of this little *fête* in honour of another step forwards in the career of Italian regeneration. But my intention in taking up my pen was to give you some little account of the new race of Tuscan journals which the improved law of the press

in this country has called into sudden existence. The periodical press of Italy presents at this moment a very interesting spectacle. It has sprung into life with a promptitude and vigour that strikingly indicate the violence of the compressing force which heretofore kept it down. It has flashed intellectual light through the Peninsula, with a startling suddenness that recals to the mind the magnificent declaration of the physical operation of Omnipotence, "Let there be light, and there was light." A moment's consideration of the nature of the periodical press in England or in France—of its office, its importance, its operation, and its influence —will in some degree enable one to conceive the extent of the void in a social system unprovided with anything of the kind. A further retrospective glance given to the gradual progress of our own periodical literature, will show that it is, even in favourable soils, not generally one of the fastest grown products of civilization.

Bearing all this in mind, I cannot but think that the present newspaper literature of Italy is a very striking phenomenon,—and very strongly

encouraging as to the place which the youthful free nations of the Peninsula may be expected to take among the more civilized people of Europe. It must be remembered that twelve months ago there did not exist in Tuscany a single publication worthy of the name or office of a newspaper. The one or two meagre sheets which each week produced were filled with government announcements—a little attempt at dramatic criticism, always mere panegyric—a few sonnets and conundrums—and price-currents. There are now published in Florence three daily papers and seven either weekly or half-weekly.

La Patria is entitled to the first place among them on the ground of character, information, and influence. It was not the first in the new field opened by the amended laws of the press,—having been preceded by its rival in all honourable and friendly emulation, the *Alba*. I believe that the latter has still the larger circulation,—though the gradually increasing sale of *La Patria* has latterly nearly, if not quite, overtaken it. *La Patria* started with eight hundred subscribers,—and has now between two thousand and two thou-

sand five hundred. The principal, if not sole proprietor, is the Marchese Ricasoli,—the present Gonfaloniere of Florence, and one of the most respected and respectable of the old Florentine nobility. The paper is conducted by Signori Salvagnoli, Lambruschini, and Massari. The first is an advocate, *facile princeps*, of the bar of Florence,—a very able and singularly eloquent man. The articles in *La Patria* are always signed with the name of the writer, except in the case of such as set forth the opinion held by the journal in matters involving important principles,—which are signed "La Direzione." But it is rarely necessary for the readers of *La Patria* to cast their eyes to the bottom of Salvagnoli's articles in order to know whose production they are reading. There is a vigour, a terseness, and a closeness of argumentation in his writings which unmistakably mark his style and make him a most valuable writer for the business of educating the infant public mind now forming in Italy. The qualities of style which I have mentioned are especially rare in Italian writers of the present day; whose most prominent and general fault, perhaps, is a tendency to diffuse

wishy-washy verbiage,—the very natural consequence of the habit of writing with the view principally of saying nothing. In Salvagnoli a profound knowledge of the history of his own country and a very competent acquaintance with the political system and growth of the constitutional governments of Europe, as well as with the writings of our best constitutional lawyers and political economists, combine with the qualities of his style to render him a most able and influential journalist; and will, in all probability, make him one of the leading men in the new Tuscan House of Commons.

Lambruschini is in many respects a remarkable man. He is a priest, of noble Genoese family, and nephew of the Cardinal of the same name who was Gregory XVI.'s friend and minister,—who was thought to have had the best chance of succeeding him on the Papal throne, and has been ever since understood to be the leader of the Austrian or retrograde party in the sacred college. A very different man in all respects from his Cardinal uncle is Raffaello Lambruschini. Holding opinions diametrically opposed to those which would

have pushed his fortunes at Rome under the auspices of his powerful relative, he remained a simple unbeneficed priest,—and for many years kept a school, which enjoyed the highest reputation of any in Tuscany, at Figline, a country village some twenty miles distant from Florence. This he had given up, in consequence of uncertain health, some little time before the recent dawn of a new era in Tuscany; and found himself, therefore, at the time of the establishment of *La Patria*, at leisure to take part in an undertaking so well calculated to advance the cause which engaged all his warmest hopes and sympathies. His articles in the paper are generally on topics of grave and permanent importance; and are ever thoughtful, calm, and philosophical,—though, perhaps, rather didactic than argumentative. In a recent number of *La Patria*, now before me, there is an admirable article from his pen on the question, whether in the constitution to be shortly given to Tuscany, it should be declared that "the Catholic religion is the sole religion of the state." I cannot refrain from quoting the concluding words in which this Roman Catholic

priest sums up *his* opinion of state protection for religion. "A tariff which forbids the exportation of food prepares the way for famine; and the power which forbids the profession of any other than a certain given religion, or which discountenances in any way such as do not profess it, makes men irreligious. * * * It is my earnest prayer, preferred from no philosophic pride, but from Catholic faith and zeal, that in the statutes of the Constitution no mention should be made of any 'religion of the State,'—a subject of which the State can know nothing. It will be for the laws to punish outrages against Religion, and to defend the free profession of it according to the dictates of each man's conscience."

Massari, the third of the editorial triumvirate, is a Neapolitan, exiled from his country for the last ten years,—but by the recent amnesty permitted to return. He is a facile and animated writer; dealing for the most part rather with facts, while his elder colleagues discuss theories and evolve principles.

Another stranger from the south, a Sicilian, the Marchese Busaca, deserves to be mentioned

as a contributor from whose pen *La Patria* has derived many excellent papers, chiefly on topics of political economy. Such is the *personnel* of *La Patria;* a paper which I cannot but think does very great credit to the city that produces it, and yet more to that city that buys and reads it—for *La Patria* would be called a "heavy" paper in England. Such a paper could only circulate among earnest thinkers, anxious for instruction and enlightenment. It is wholly destitute of those lighter features which would in either France or England be thought so necessary to ensure popularity and sale. No horrid murders, no singular accidents, no piquant rivalry and quarrelling with other prints, no police-court reports, no excitement of ultra-violent politics, not even the interest arising from an active collecting and eager publication of news and rumours. During a time especially rife with all sorts of flying reports of the most exciting kind, *La Patria* has been most exemplary sober in receiving or propagating them. Again I say that the circulation of a daily paper of such a description to the extent of between two and three thousand copies in so limited a

population augurs well for the often-questioned fitness of this people for the political franchises now at length bestowed upon them.

The *Alba* is an excellent and highly talented paper, full of spirited and vigorous writing, characterized by honest frankness and uncompromising boldness. It is, of course, wholly liberal—perhaps a shade or two more violent in its politics than the more staid and philosophic *Patria;* and it is edited by a young priest (!) named Atto Vannucci. It was directed and almost wholly written by La Farina, a Sicilian, well known by various historical compilations — a writer of great facility and some eloquence, but not very profound. He has lately returned to his country. Altogether the *Alba* is a paper of a more popular character than its rival *La Patria.* It is written by younger men, and has all the appearance of being so. It has never exercised a similar discretion as to accrediting and spreading unauthenticated and dubious news; and has accordingly often found itself under the necessity of contradicting its yesterday's assertions.

The *Gazzetta di Firenze*—the third of our

daily papers—is the official organ of the government. Of the editor, Pedani, there is little to be said. He is assisted by the Abbate Casali of San Marino,—a liberal man and a good writer.

The *Rivista* is published twice a week. It is conducted by a junta of five, all young men, —and it represents what our neighbours called the "extrème gauche." Cempini, son of the minister, is one of its editors. It is not without talent by any means; but as compared with either the *Patria* or *Alba* it is wholly uninfluential.

Il Giornale Militare, published weekly, is what its title indicates. In its politics it is liberal.

The same may be said of the *Commercio* and of the *Avvenire*, both old papers;—of which the latter used to be called the *Ricoglitore* till new times admonished it to change its name on the "*tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*" principle.

The *Giornaletto per Popolani* and the *Popolano* are both small weekly sheets, published at a very low price, and addressed ex-

clusively to *the people*. But the two are of very different character. The latter strives to amuse and attract its public by matter often objectionable, rarely useful. It is evident that it is merely a commercial speculation,—and I should think an unsuccessful one.

The *Giornaletto per Popolani*, on the other hand, is excellently and skilfully adapted to the purpose of instructing and educating as well as amusing its humble readers. The name of its editor, Signor Thouar, long favourably known in Tuscany by his varied and persevering exertions in the cause of popular education, is here a sufficient guarantee for the scope and tendency of the work. It is pleasing to be able to add, as another indication of the temper of the Florentine public, that its circulation is much larger than that of its less laudable rival.

Lastly, the *Philocatolico*, edited by an ancient canon of the cathedral, named Silvestri, is our only retrograde—or, as we here say, *oscurantista*—journal. Until special inquiries, made with the view of writing this letter, revealed its existence to me, I had never heard

of it. And I should think that the great bulk of the Florentine public are in the same happy state of ignorance.

Besides these papers published in the capital, Tuscany supports the *Corriere Livornese* of Leghorn, *Il Popolo* of Siena, and *L'Italia* of Pisa; all liberal, well edited, and well supported papers. The latter, under the direction of Professors Montanelli and Marco Tabarini, and published three times a week, is remarkable as being the organ of what may be called the Church-liberal party; and represents the opinion of those who wish to make the present movement in Italy essentially a religious as well as a political one, and who look to the liberal Pope and to the Church—which they hope to see liberalized as to its temporal sympathies—as the captain and leaders of Italian progress and civilization.

Truly, I think it must be admitted that we have here a goodly crop as the produce of only a few months' freedom from a crushing censorship. But before concluding this somewhat too long letter, I must not omit one or two names of writers actually engaged in contributing to the formation and education of

the public mind through the columns of the daily press, though they do not belong to the staff of any journal. The Advocate Ricci, a talented and enlightened man, and Centofanti of Pisa, well known by his social and political writings, are both active contributors to various journals. Above all, must not be forgotten Paolo Emiliano Giudici of Palermo, an enlightened politician, a vigorous and original thinker, and an indefatigable writer. His recently published "History of Italian Literature" has had a success in the Peninsula such as no work has equalled for some time; and I venture to predict that, slow as we are to interest ourselves about new names in foreign literature, the name of Giudici will not remain unknown in London, if, as is most probable, it is nearly so at present.

A dinner was given here, the other day, by the Florentines, to the Sicilians in Florence, in celebration of the newly-granted Neapolitan constitution; and on that occasion, Giudici was publicly requested to undertake to write a history of the recent struggle in Sicily. All sorts of documents have been promised

him by the newly-installed Government at Naples, as well as by the Palermitan leaders; and a volume—which can hardly fail of being a very interesting one—will be the result.

Having thus been led to mention the new Government at Naples, I may conclude my letter by observing that Bozzelli, the Minister of the Interior, is a brother of the guild,—having long since received the printers'-ink baptism. Besides other smaller matters, he is the author of a very learned and deeply thoughtful book on "Tragic Imitation," in three volumes, published some ten years since, at Naples.

LETTER VI.

Florence, June 5.

We had, last night, an illumination here, and the day before, a grand "Te Deum" at the Duomo, and the day before that, a *Requiem*. The first two were rejoicings for successes against the Austrians, and the latter was in mourning for the Tuscan victims in the struggle, — an April-day succession of gladness to tears, which must have grated on the feelings of those whose beloved ones were lying stiff on the plains of Lombardy! And, indeed, many a grim old Florentine *palazzo* remained dark and sombre, amid the general blaze—a black spot upon the face of triumph, which marked the families whose bereavement forbade them to rejoice.

The more especial cause of rejoicing was

the taking of the fortress of Peschiera; and in the midst of the popular joy, while the city was blazing with its millions of lamps, a report got into circulation that Peschiera was not taken, after all. However, the general belief was, that the news was at length true,—although we have had some five or six false reports to the same effect, already. In fact, the uncertainty of all the information that reaches us, respecting the war in Lombardy, is such, that we may be considered in total ignorance on the subject. The fresh crop of reports and assertions of the most positive kind which each day produces, is sure to be destroyed by the counter-assertions of the next. Strange to say, here, at the distance of a couple of hundred miles or so from the scene of action, our most reliable source of information is the London papers. In the meantime, if we live in much ignorance, in this lotus-eating, happy valley, we live in proportionable tranquillity. Wars and rumours of wars, Heaven knows, we hear enough of,—with blowing-up of magazines, ravaging of country, failing food, &c. But all these things are "on the other side of the

mountains." The friendly Apennine rears up his sturdy back between us and all this turmoil,—and life in Florence pursues the ordinary tenor of its placid, dreamy course.

The crash of falling thrones and roar of revolutions, therefore, has not so entirely banished from the fair city of flowers all more civilizing pursuits, as to afford no materials for a bulletin of matters literary. Our press, it is true, being now very satisfactorily free, reflects—as a free press must and ought to do—the public feelings and opinions of the time being; and we have thus rather more of the *field* and less of the *grove* than could be wished. Little boys, with hands full of wet broad sheets, scream to you in the streets, to buy an account of "*Radeschi*, mortalmente ferito" — or "I Tedeschi cacciati da Mantova"—or "Summossa generale nel regno di Napoli," &c. &c.; and a stirring commerce is done in these articles, more especially as each fresh document makes occasion for another to contradict it; and the good Florentines seem never to doubt a bit the more, but buy and swallow, with even fresh appetite, each

new dose of apocryphal intelligence. It is so new to them, poor fellows, to have public affairs to talk about, and to be allowed to talk about them! Then the mural announcements which meet one's eyes on all sides, and give evidence that men are already beginning to avail themselves of the privilege of saying what they think, are, for the most part, more or less characteristic of the time. We have "Popular Explanations of the Constitution," "Advice to the Electors of Tuscany," "On the Military Organization of Tuscany," "Libertà e Religione!" "On the Admissibility of Government Functionaries to sit in the Chamber," all recently published. The feeling against the Jesuits, although it is long since Tuscany was afflicted with their presence, is as strong as ever. Gioberti's book, "Il Gesuita moderno," has had a large sale, in two forms, already; a costly 8vo edition, and a foolscap one in six volumes, which is to be had for about thirty pauls—from 13*s.* to 14*s.* Yet, heavy and prolix as the book is, and almost unreadable to the fastidious modern readers of these days, another still cheaper edition is about to be published

immediately, in Florence, in numbers. It is to be completed in fifty-seven numbers, at two crazie (about 1½*d.*) each; every number to consist of sixteen pages of letter-press, and the entire work to form two volumes, which will thus cost between 6*s.* and 7*s.* only—a sufficiently clear indication of the extent of circulation contemplated. The author, who is now at Rome, and whose journey thither resembled a triumphal progress, and his reception in the Eternal City that of an emperor, has just published another smaller product of his indefatigable pen, on the "Condizioni presenti e future d'Italia." In the meantime, artists engrave his portrait, sculptors multiply his bust, and the *gamins* scrawl his name over all the walls.

The old Tuscan vein of satire, too, is beginning to show itself again. Less ferocious than the "vendetta di penna" wielded by the popular successors of Juvenal at Rome—less earnest, perhaps, but more delicate—humorously sly rather than indignant—it is strongly characteristic of the light, easy, and laughter-loving character of the people. Thus, we have an "Almanacco dei Giornalisti,"—a quiz

on all and each of the newly-arisen tribe of journalists; "Consigli di Satan ai Padri Gesuiti,"—the drift of which may be easily imagined; and, above all, plenty of ballads about "Matternic-che."

The solid advantages of a free press, too, are showing themselves significantly enough in bold inquiries into the abuses of a system ever hitherto more jealously screened from all unwelcome questioning than even the doings of princes themselves. Thus we have "A Letter, by a Priest, on the Residence of the Bishop of Fiesole in Florence;" and another priest writing "On the Present Condition of the Tuscan Clergy." Then we have "Inquiries into the Disabilities of the Jews;" and a very strong and growing feeling against all religious inequality. Can it be, that once again, after so many generations, poor Italy will have to read a lesson to us proud islanders, and recommend to civilized England her teachings of civilization? It seems likely enough,—not only on that isolated point, but on the larger kindred subject of entire separation between Church and State. The recent events at Rome have done much to advance the minds

of thinking men of all classes of opinion throughout Italy in that direction.

Among other signs of the times, we may notice with a smile—though by no means one of contempt or ridicule — a lady champion coming forward amid the host of political writers called forth by the new state of things in the Peninsula. The Signora Caterina Franceschi Ferrucci gives us a treatise on a republican form of government in Italy. The tide of opinion has manifested itself strongly in almost all parts of Italy against republicanism. Here, at Florence, a week or two ago, a number of a journal called the "Populano" was publicly burnt by the populace in the middle of the principal square of the city, because it advocated republican principles. At Milan and at Naples there is a republican party, though it is in both cases a very small minority: but here the individuals known to hold such opinions may almost be counted on the fingers. One, the most remarkable among them, is Guerrazzi, the author of a volume of biographical notices of modern Italians, of a little novel entitled "Isabella Orsini," which had a great success

and of various other things, written not without eloquence and energy of style. He was, a short time since, arrested at Leghorn as the ringleader of a sedition there, and sentenced to imprisonment at Porto Ferraio, on the island of Elba — the Tuscan Botany Bay. There, he wrote a "Sermon for Good Friday, composed in the Prisons of Falcone, at Porto Ferraio," — which has been published and placarded all over Florence. The Government make not the slightest objection; and it is not likely to do any mischief to any one—but the publisher.

But amid all these lighter *zeit-schriften*, as the Germans would call them, the excitement of revolution and the stress of politics have not entirely suspended the pursuit of more serious studies. Previously to the commencement of these disturbing causes, historical research had for the last three or four years been most actively prosecuted throughout the Peninsula. And though such pursuits have been, of course, in some measure suspended by the occupation of men's minds on matters of more stirring and more immediate interest, yet there are not wanting some who still have

refused to abandon their wanderings amid the paths of "hoar Antiquity," and still find them, as Warton says, "strewn with flowers." The veteran Vieusseux, continues his "Archivio Storico Italiano,"—a work which in every way deserves to be introduced to the notice of historical students in England, but of which I have seen no mention in any English publication. Vieusseux himself is highly deserving of a recording word of encouragement and approval, as a worthy successor and representative of those old scholar-publishers whose occupation was to them a labour of love, and who by no means confined their acquaintance with the products of their press to title-page and colophon. The patriotic and historical literature of Italy, in truth, owes much to the liberality, enlightenment, and perseverance of Giorgio Pietro Vieusseux, who has spent a lifetime in the cause, and whose efforts in less happy times were rewarded with the crown of martyrdom—suffered, if not in person, at least in purse. He is "Direttore Editore" of the "Archivio Storico," as well as proprietor of the property and originator of the undertaking. It would, however, stretch this letter beyond

all reasonable bounds if I were to attempt now to give you any account of the scope of the "Archivio," and of the results already accomplished. I must reserve all this for a future letter,—when a little examination of the volumes published may perhaps enable me to give a hint or two to some of our own learned publishing societies.

Similar praise of activity cannot be awarded to the Accademia della Crusca in the prosecution of its new edition of the celebrated Dictionary. The Academy undertook in 1841 to give the world a new, corrected, and much enlarged edition (the fifth) of their great work. It was certainly needed; for, despite the efforts and expostulations of pedant purists—who would fain forbid a language ever to grow and adapt itself to the necessities which new ideas and advancing civilization create—the Italian tongue had undoubtedly progressed beyond the limits assigned to it in the last edition of the great authority. It is possible to keep a language stationary only by paralyzing all movement in the people who speak and write it. The new edition was to be published in numbers,—of which the first was nearly ready.

It consisted, as every succeeding number was to do, of eighty folio pages, very handsomely printed in double columns, on an excellent paper, and was to cost only nine pauls, or 4*s*. In short, nothing more could be desired in point of beauty, accuracy, or cheapness. But, alas! four numbers were published by the end of 1843, and since that not a line!—although to all inquiries it is invariably replied that the Academy is hard at work at its task. The fourth number brings the work to ACC,—so that, at this rate of progress, the labours of the learned Della Cruscans must inevitably be interminable; for, by the time our grandsons have the completion of this fifth edition, the early part of the alphabet will urgently demand a sixth.

With far more of brave exertion and energetic perseverance than can be attributed to these epicurean gods of Florentine literature, the Della Cruscans, Signor Eugenio Alberi is gallantly proceeding with his great edition of the works of Galileo, amid toil, difficulties, discouragements, and obstacles of all sorts. The seventh volume has just appeared. The fifth—which was published some time since—

contained the much-talked-of and long-lost observations of the great astronomer on the satellites of Jupiter; which form one of the most important features in the new edition of the Florentine philosopher's complete works. The scientific world is well aware that Galileo was known to have left a most important series of Ephemerides on the satellites of Jupiter—the labour of ten years, from 1610 to 1619—which he himself speaks of as an Herculean work, and which nearly cost him his eyesight. It is also well known that the MSS. containing these observations have been lamented as lost for the last two hundred years. Baron Zach, in his "Correspondance Astronomique," vol. i. p. 475, has written,—"It is impossible sufficiently to regret this precious series of observations made by Renieri* during ten years and by Galileo during twenty-eight.† It is an irreparable loss of thirty-eight years of labour, of watching, of pain, of perseverance—I had almost said of agony! And all disappeared in a moment, as if by

* Galileo's assistant and disciple.

† Zach is in error respecting the length of time. It is correctly stated above.

enchantment, without anybody being able to explain how."

The whole of this mass of papers (Renieri's as well as Galileo's are to be published) Signor Alberi discovered among the very extensive collection of astronomical MSS.—in great measure Galileo's—in the library of the Pitti Palace. Much jealousy and illiberality was shown towards Signor Alberi at the time by those who, from their position, *might* have made the discovery, and *did not.* It was first asserted that the papers pointed out did not contain the lost Ephemerides at all—then that they contained fragments only of them—then that the discovery was of no value in the present state of science—and, lastly, that it was no discovery at all, for that they had been known to exist before! It would be tedious to go over all the dispute to which these unworthy assertions gave rise. Suffice it, that Signor Alberi has victoriously vindicated his right to be considered the discoverer of these long-lost labours. Of the value of this discovery, the following words of M. Arago—quoted from the "Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences; 21 Août, 1843"—

are a sufficient proof:—"He considered it extremely important that the oldest observations of Galileo and Renieri should be found;" and he declared, that "if the assertions of Signor Alberi were true—if the MSS. of the Pitti Palace do really contain all the labours of Galileo and Renieri on the satellites of Jupiter—Signor Alberi will have given a value to papers hitherto disregarded—he will have been the first to assign to MSS. already catalogued their real meaning and true place in the history of science—he will, in fact, have made a real discovery." That the papers in question do so contain the lost observations every one may now satisfy himself from inspection of the published volume containing them.

The sixth and seventh volumes of the complete works consist of the first portion of the letters, — which will occupy five volumes. These will be divided into three classes of letters; those written by Galileo, those to him, and those between other correspondents relating to him. The mass of these letters preserved in the Pitti Library is very great. But the letters of Galileo himself are only 350 in

number,—while those addressed to him are more than two thousand. The whole of the former will be published, — and the most interesting portion of the latter, such as those from Castelli, Cesi, Cavalieri, Renieri, Marsili, Micanzio, Sagredo, Kepler, and Diodati. From some of these correspondents there are hundreds of letters. Of those by Galileo himself, about half are now published for the first time. This immense mass of correspondence,—part of which only is scientific in its nature, and part is the ordinary intercourse with familiar friends,—will afford abundant materials for something more like a complete life of the philosopher than has yet been attempted. And this Signor Alberi is busily engaged in preparing. It will form a portion of the edition.

LETTER VII.

Florence, June 22.

I HAVE just returned from witnessing one of those old-world spectacles of which the Middle Ages were so fond,—and which yet linger amid the so incongruous sights and sounds of modern life, like fragments of a former age cut bodily out of their proper framework and thrust strangely and discordantly into the midst of the nineteenth century. This morning was the great Catholic festival of the "Corpus Domini,"—the antique pageantry of which at Florence has yet survived the wreck of so much! It will not survive much longer. Very possibly the spectacle which I have just witnessed may be the last of the series of some thousand such that fair Florence is destined ever to gaze at. The same causes which have

gradually placed such shows and ceremonies among the things of the past in England and in France are now rapidly operating to produce a similar effect in Italy. They are, in truth, the pleasures of children, or of ages childlike in simplicity; and the people of Italy are now becoming, like their elder brothers of the European family, men. And, thereupon, my dear *laudator temporis acti*, you wax melancholy,—and sigh over the vanishing of all the olden-time braveries, with their picturesque associations of poetry and romance! Truly, in many an idle hour I could sympathize with you,—and "we too would rail against our mistress the world and all our misery;" but, alack! the world *is* our mistress herein,—and progress is as inevitable as old age. You doubt, too, whether the Italians will be the happier for outgrowing their childhood, their childhood's pleasures, and childish simplicity. The song tells us that "care comes with manhood as light comes with day." Doubtless it is so. But groan over it as we may, we must needs "accept the fact,"—as the French phrase it,—and make the best of it.

Italy's childhood is gone,—or fast going;

and for this reason I will place on record some account of what is very likely to have been the last Florentine celebration of "Corpus Domini." Even upon this occasion, though the Church and the Court put forth all their usual efforts in contributing to the magnificence of the show, the wonted spirit of rejoicing was not present. The thing passed heavily; for the hearts of the people were elsewhere, and their thoughts were busy with more serious matters. Some were saddened by the loss of those who partook of this day's festival with them last year:—and all were weighed down by the consciousness of important interests to be debated and settled for evil or for good, more or less by each man's own abilities and efforts.

The material portion of the pageantry was, however, all there. It is a spectacle which comparatively few English witness; for it takes place at a time of year when a great majority of English visitors have left the fair city,—scampering off, as they do, in all directions at the first bold glances of the Italian summer's sun. But picture lovers must

remember the look of those processions, which some of the Venetian painters were so fond of representing, in all the rich magnificence of colouring of their gorgeous school, passing through the noble Piazza or over some one of the thousand bridges of the Queen of the Adriatic.

Florence can boast of no such spot as the Piazza di San Marco for the exhibition of her gala pageantry, it must be admitted. But the procession of this morning was picturesque enough as I saw it sweeping across the Piazza di Santa Maria Novella towards the principal entrance of that fine church,—a noble specimen of the Italian gothic which prevailed during the best ages of the Florentine republic. An awning had been erected across the whole extent of the larger piazza, and over the streets leading thither from the Duomo, beneath which the procession passed:—a most necessary precaution, as the blazing sun was such as to secure with tolerable certainty a "colpo di sole" to any bare craniums which had dared to expose themselves to its beams. The head of the procession left the

Duomo about half-past six, and its close entered the church of Santa Maria Novella about ten.

First in the long line came the various confraternities, with their banners and peculiar dresses. These are lay bodies of citizens associated together for various religious or charitable purposes. The principal one among them is the celebrated "Misericordia," whose existence is generally said to date from the period of the great plague in Florence, in the year 1348,—but which in reality was then an hundred years old. Its especial object was, and is, to afford charitable attention to the dying and the dead; and, with such functions, it naturally became of increased importance at a period when there were none others to take on them the fearful office, which this brotherhood, faithful even then to their vows, never failed to discharge to the utmost of their power. The leading principle of their ministry is secrecy in their well-doing. To this end, the brothers are never seen in the city about any of their works of mercy uncovered by a black hood and cloak which conceals the entire person. Two holes only are cut in the hood for

the eyes; and the person thus concealed is not by any possibility recognisable by mother, wife or friend. The shape of the hood is conical, and the entire effect thus produced is hideous in the extreme, and to an imaginative temperament almost awful. Bands of these silent darksome figures, encountered, as is constantly the case at Florence, in the performance of their dismal duty, are escorting either a litter with a sick man to the hospital, all hidden, like the bearers, beneath a black canopy,—or a corpse on its bier to the dead house. Preceded by a pair of lurid torches, and followed by a train of the brethren, who from time to time advance to place in turn their shoulders under the burthen, while the first bearers fall to the rear—and all in utter silence—they pass like beings of another world along the thronged streets; and every one moves aside from their path, and lifts the hat in token of reverence for their office of mercy. The Grand Duke himself is a member; and for aught that any one can know, may at any time be one of the sombre silent train. Such is the celebrated "Misericordia," which now turns out with its emblematical banners to do

honour to the "Corpus Domini." A variety of confraternities of lesser note follow. All are equally disguised in gown and hood of various colours. Some are red, some brown, some white, some grey. Still more hideous, though less solemn, than their black compeers of the "Misericordia," the element of the grotesque which their strange costume introduces into the *coup d'œil*, though destructive of all beauty and grace, yet imparts to it that character of quaintness which contributes to throw the imagination into the days of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. These associations have various objects. Some much resemble our burial clubs, with the addition of various Roman practices of devotion. Some are merely societies united in honour of some especial saint or shrine. It is hard to say how or why their devotion is aided by the hideous disguise which they choose to assume.

And here it may be mentioned episodically that in this old Florentine custom is to be sought the etymology of our familiar term "bigot." Various names were given by the people, by no means in disrespect, to these

companies. Those in grey—"*bigio*"—were called "bigotti." As piety grew cool and hypocrisy and formalism abundant, these "bigotti" were so called in a different spirit. The name was gradually applied to other fanatics:—and thus from these *grey* devotees came our term of reproach for that piety which has more of form than of spirit, and more of ecclesiastical hatred than of Christian charity in its composition.

Well! all these confraternities, black, white, red and grey, marched with huge tapers in their hands, throwing their sullen smoky light with impotent insolence in the face of the blazing sun's majesty. Each taper is always on these occasions sedulously attended by a little ragged urchin carrying a sheet of paper folded into a recipient for the falling wax, which these huge flaring torches drop abundantly. This is a favourite branch of industry with the Florentine *gamins*,—and has been carried on upon sufferance till it seems to have become a vested right. The solemnity and magnificence of the spectacle is, as may be easily supposed, not a little destroyed by the incongruous intervention of a number of

ragged little ragamuffins, who do not scruple even to increase their profits by scraping the melting wax from the candle while in the hand of some lay or ecclesiastical dignitary. But the Italians do not heed incongruities; and the total insensibility to eye-sores which to us would, in the house, in the garden, in the church, in the city, be intolerable, is one of the most striking peculiarities of their idiosyncrasy.

Next follow the various fraternities of monks,—mostly of the mendicant orders. And here is presented a fine study to the phrenologist in the long succession of "shaven crowns," as they defile with solemn face and downcast eyes, kneeling from time to time for extra piety, and droning forth some litany the dull, grating, sleepy tones of which seem to load the hot air and render it yet more oppressive. I do not pretend to any knowledge of phrenology beyond such as may be said to belong rather to that art unconsciously practised by us all, physiognomy; but I could not help thinking as I looked down on the long row of bare skulls and faces unrelieved by moustache or whisker, that I read plainly

enough there the degrading consequences of the life and doctrines professed by those mendicants. Of the poetical conception of the monkish type—the high-minded, strong-faithed, stern, ascetic fanatic—I saw not a single specimen. But there were brutish, heavy-jowled sensualism, vacant imbecility, low under-glancing cunning, and scowling thin-lipped malignant bigotry, more than enough. The best of the lot were one or two rosy, burly, frank-looking, jolly dogs of the Friar Tuck breed.

After the friars came the other ecclesiastical bodies and dignitaries of the city,—the different chapters, with their canons, deacons, sub-deacons, and acolytes. And here shone forth, in all its magnificence, that clerical dandyism in which the priesthood of the Romish church love to indulge, and which exhibits itself in superb lace borders to surplices and rochets, &c.—lace upwards of a foot deep of the most exquisite beauty, enough to make many a wealthy dowager's heart sick with envy! Then there were mantlets of crimson silk, copes of cloth of gold blazing dazzlingly in the sunbeams, chasubles stiff with embroidery,

and huge gold and silver candlesticks by the score.

Then came the municipal dignitaries, with their "gonfaloniere" in mantle of cloth of gold, preceded by the city banner, bearing on a white ground the red "giglio"—the ancient cognizance of Florence: which, be it understood, is not what we call a lily, as generally supposed, but an iris. Then the judges, in suits of sober black, with small silver-hilted court rapiers. After these followed the knights of St. Stephen, in their long mantles of white and red, the national colours of Tuscany. This order was instituted for the suppression of the Saracenic pirates in the Mediterranean, and the Grand Duke is always Grand Master. On the anniversary of "Corpus Domini," he always wears the robes of the order; and this is about all that remains of its ancient glories. The Grand Duke in these heavy hot robes, poor fellow! bare-headed, and with a huge candle in his hand, marches immediately behind the host, which is borne under a vast silken canopy. All the crowd, lay, ecclesiastic, and military, kneel as it passes:—and this is

the sole shadow of a hint that the ceremony is in anywise a religious one.

The procession was closed by a large number of the new *guardia civica;* and really a very creditable-looking body of men they appeared, dressed in dark blue frock coats with red collars, cuffs and epaulettes, dark blue trousers, and helmets with black horsehair drooping crests. Two very tolerable bands accompanied them; but unfortunately persisted in playing two opposite tunes,—doubtless on the newly recognised anti-monopoly competition principle!

All this mass of people occupied more than an hour in passing before the window where I was stationed; and I counted no less than sixty banners and huge crucifixes borne among them. At last, all got packed inside the vast church. The mass was hurried through as speedily as might be; and the Grand Duke and his suite returned to the Palace, while the ecclesiastical part of the procession went back to the Duomo.

Strange that such a result should seem to any people worth the labour, expense and loss

of time incurred in the preparation and enactment of such a pageant! But such are the "circenses" with which the people of Florence have for many centuries been wont unwearyingly to delight themselves. As I have said, however, now that they are ceasing to be children it is to be supposed that they will put away childish things.

I have kept this letter back some days, to tell you of the opening of the Tuscan parliament,—which had been fixed for this day, Monday, June the 26th. It is well known that there are a party here,—headed, it is said, with good appearance of truth, by no less influential a person than the Gonfaloniere,—who wish that Tuscany should be added to the dominions of Carlo Alberto. It is said also that his Sardinian Majesty's gold has been busy in Florence in strengthening this party. And it was thought that the ceremony of today might probably not pass off without some attempt at disturbance. But nothing of the sort has taken place. Our good gentle Florentines have a very inordinate gift of the gab,—but are most creditably slow to *act* violently.

The members of both houses went at 11 a.m.

to the Duomo, to hear mass. They then proceeded to the Palazzo Vecchio—that grand old specimen of the castellated civic architecture of republican Florence, which, more than any other edifice, is intimately associated with all the storied glories of the fair city's olden time: and there, in the "sala de' cinque cento," one of the noblest halls in Europe, received the Grand Duke,—who was welcomed in the most enthusiastic manner. He motioned to the Senators and Deputies to seat themselves, himself sat down, and proceeded to read an opening speech. It is a well-written document, containing more of meaning, and less of verbiage with no meaning, than such compositions usually do; and was loudly applauded in several parts; more especially where the Grand Duke speaks of the sacrifices to be made for the holy cause of Italian independence;—nor less where he speaks of the preservation of "order, the supreme good of nations."

The speech ended, each member of the new parliament—the Senators first, and then the Deputies—were called severally by name to swear fidelity to the Grand Duke and the Constitution. Each, as his name was called,

held up his right hand and said aloud, "Lo giuro." I was not a little amused by an elderly lady near me in the Hall, who, after having heard this form repeated several times, opening her eyes more and more at each successive repetition, at last turned round and asked, "Cosa dice? *ciuco!*" ("What does he say? ciuco!") — *Ciuco*, gentle English reader, means a donkey! I fear me the old lady's notion of what was going on anent the Constitution was about as clear as that of a large number of her countrymen. Never mind! the children will not learn to go alone as long as they are kept in go-carts; and the man who would not get into the water till he could swim never learned to swim at all.

Ere concluding my letter, I may tell you that we have Gioberti here. He arrived from Rome yesterday. He was escorted in triumph by the citizens to his inn; and a guard of honour, of the civic guards, was immediately posted before the door of the house.

LETTER VIII.

Florence.

At the date of my last letter from Interlaken the comparatively small knot of English collected there were beginning to recognise the very decidedly wintry blasts which each morning and evening sent down on their happy valley from the snowy storm arsenals of the Jungfrau, as timely warnings to quit their summer quarters. But the question among them was, whither and by what route should they go? For every day's post was bringing disagreeable intelligence of one kind or another from almost all parts of Europe. Dangerous and ugly giants,—the incarnations of various forms of social malady,—were reported to be infesting the country in all directions. Many were the consultations which might have been

heard,—fertile in objections, sterile in conclusions. "We thought of going southwards by the Simplon," says Mrs. A., "but really after all one hears of that horrid old Radetzky at Milan I am afraid of passing through Lombardy."—"We meant to have crossed the Mont Cenis and proceeded by Turin and Genoa," quoth Mr. B., "but I see that Genoa is in a state of rebellion and the republic proclaimed, and as I don't wish to find myself between the muskets of Charles Albert and his insurgent subjects, I shall shun *Genova la superba*."—"I shall go from Geneva to Marseilles," says Mr. C. very decidedly, "and thence take the mail steamer for Leghorn direct."—"What, with the red republic rampant at Marseilles and cannonading going on in the streets of Leghorn!" retorts Mr. D. "For my part I think the only chance of quiet would be St. Petersburg."—"Yes, if you fancy the blue cholera better than the red republic!" replies Mr. C. with some reason.

Many were the unsatisfactory discussions of which the above is no exaggerated representation. But having on many occasions learnt that in such cases no magnifying glass is so

powerful a distender of molehills into mountains as distance and a newspaper, I and those with me determined to pursue the route we had laid down for ourselves despite rebellious cities and marching troops. We crossed the Cenis, therefore, — passed through Turin, (which we found illuminated, to our great surprise, inasmuch as Charles Albert and his army had just returned from Lombardy, having lost everything,—till we were informed that the candles were burnt, not in honour of the king, but of the Virgin, by this strange nation of children, who *will* have their "circenses" even when they have *not* bread with them)— and in due course reached Genoa, where we dined and slept as tranquilly as if the right divine of kings were still in the ascendant and passive obedience yet the creed of Europe. We thus reached Tuscany and its lovely capital without the shadow of an adventure or the smallest let or hindrance of any kind.

We found the "flower of all cities, city of all flowers," smiling as usual amid her fig-trees, vines and olives, and basking in the genial October sun *almost* as quietly as if thrones were not quaking around her, and the founda-

tions of social life undergoing question and examination. It was the season called here, "St. Martin's summer"—the latter part of the autumn, that is to say; the season of the vintage and of the "villegiatura," when every Florentine landowner quits his city residence to spend some six weeks in the country,—the entire remainder of the year being almost universally devoted to the city. Classic Arno showed far more of stony bed than of water; and Arno's swans, if they existed in sober prose, must needs run aground on Arno's shingles for want of water to swim in. For the summer had been a very dry one. The vintage, therefore, was good in quality and small in quantity. But, what is worse, the want of rain had caused a great deficiency in the chesnut crop; a failure which always produces much distress in the poorer and mountainous districts,—where the chesnut is to the Tuscan peasant what the potato is to the Irishman, always his principal and often his sole article of food.

In the rich and fertile Valdarno, however, where almost every field and each hill-side teems with corn, wine, and oil, growing inter-

mingled from the same soil, the farmer and proprietor of the land look less to either of the two first of these products than to the third as a source of profit and wealth. The oil is the great thing. Always below rather than above the demand in quantity, the golden oil of the Valdarno is readily changeable at any moment into solid gold; and by a recognised usage of long standing—similar to one which, I believe, prevails with regard to the Durham mustard trade—all transactions in it are for ready money. Nothing can be more primitive and unimproved than the Tuscan method of obtaining this valuable produce from the berry, or than that of settling accounts between landlord and tenant. Almost every estate has its "villa," the country residence of the landowner. Often his "fattore," or bailiff, inhabits it, or a portion of it. Nor is it rare for the house of the "contadino," or farmer, to be close to that of his landlord, or even under the same roof. For the Tuscan noble is unconscious of that feeling of exclusiveness, or wish for privacy, or daintiness of taste or eye, which would make such an arrangement disagreeable to an English landlord. Although

the internal and external appearance of the Tuscan "contadino's" dwelling and family must certainly be admitted to be more calculated to give offence to our notions of what is agreeable, than that of the English farmer; on the other hand, if the English feeling in these matters indicates a more advanced material civilization, it must be owned that the Tuscan arrangement presents, perhaps, the more pleasant moral picture.

To the villa is brought all the produce of the land. The grapes are there pressed into wine, and the olives into oil. The oil-house is a roomy chamber with an earthen floor, in the centre of which is a kind of circular trough. In the middle is a revolving beam, or axis, with its two poles, fixed one in the floor and the other in the roof; and joined to this, at right angles, is a shaft, on which a large heavy wheel, like a mill-stone, works round and round in the trough, moved by an ox or horse. This rude and simple machinery, the same probably in all respects as was used in the Vale of Arno two thousand years ago, is all that is needed to produce the most delicious oil in the world. At one end of the

room, indeed, is a simple screw-press, like that of a bookbinder, of no great power, for extracting from the crushed pulp the last drops of its precious contents; and at the opposite end are a large hearth and caldron for the supply of warm water. A number of red earthen jars, of capacity sufficient to realize to one's imagination the story of Ali Baba and the forty thieves, stand ranged along the wall, and complete the furnishing of the chamber. The oil, when drawn off, is poured into small barrels of an invariable regulation size, containing a certain number of flasks, and supposed to form, each of them, half an ass's load. Then one barrel to the landlord, and one to the tenant, till the whole yield is equally divided between them. So also with the wine, and so with the corn. All is brought to the manor-house, and there divided. Money rents are almost if not altogether unknown.

All Tuscany had been busy with the vintage. The vintage! Is there a word more rich to the untravelled Englishman in picturesque significance and poetical associations? All that the bright South has of glowing colouring, harmonious forms, teeming abundance,

and Saturnian facility, mixed up in the imagination with certain vague visions of bright black eyes and bewitching ankles—all this, and more, goes to the making up of the Englishman's notion of the vintage. Alas! that it should be needful to dissipate such charming illusions. And yet it is well to warn those who cherish these *couleur-de-rose* imaginings, and who would fain shun a disagreeable *désenchantement*, that they will do wisely in continuing to receive their impressions of Italian ruralities from the presentations of our theatres, and the description of Mrs. Radcliffe. To those inquirers, however, of sterner mould, who would find truth, be it ever so disagreeable when found, it must be told that a Devonshire harvesting is twice as pretty, and a Kentish hop-picking thrice as pretty a scene as any "vindemia" that the vineyards of Italy can show. The vine, indeed, as grown in Italy—especially when the fruit is ripe, and the leaves begin to be tinted with crimson and yellow—is an exceedingly pretty object, rich in colouring, and elegant in its forms. Nothing but the most obsolete and backward agriculture, however, preserves these beauties. If good

wine and not pretty crops be the object in view, the vine should be grown as in France —a low dwarf plant closely pruned, and raised only two or three feet from the ground; and than such a vineyard nothing can be more ugly. Classic Italy, however, still cultivates her vines as she did when the Georgics were written; "marries" them most becomingly and picturesquely to elms or mulberries, &c., and makes of them lovely festoons and very acrid wine. Again, it must be admitted that a yoke of huge dove-coloured oxen, with their heavy unwieldy tumbril, is a more picturesque object than an English wagon and a team of horses. Occasionally, too, may be seen bearing not ungracefully a blushing burden of huge bunches, a figure, male or female, who might have sat for a model to Leopold Robert. But despite all this, the process of gathering the vintage is anything but a pleasing sight. In one of the heavy tumbrils I have mentioned, are placed some twelve or fifteen large pails, some three feet deep, and a foot or so in diameter. Into these are thrown pell-mell the bunches of fruit, ripe and unripe, clean and dirty, stalks and all, white and red indiscriminately. The

cart thus laden, the fifteen pails of unsightly, dirty-looking slush, are driven to the "fattoria," there to be emptied into vats, which appear, both to nose and eye, never to have been cleansed since they were made. In performing this operation much is of course spilt over the men employed, over the cart, over the ground; and nothing can look less agreeable than the effect thus produced. Sometimes one large tub occupies the whole tumbril, the contents of which, on reaching the "fattoria," have to be ladled out with buckets. Often the contents of the vat, trodden in one place—a most unsightly process—have to be transported in huge barrels, like water-carts, to another place to undergo fermentation. And then the thick muddy stream, laden with filth and impurities of all sorts, which is seen when these barrels discharge their cargo, is as little calculated to give one a pleasing idea of the "ruby wine" which is to be the result of all this filthy squash, as can well be imagined. Add to this an exceedingly unpleasant smell in and about all the buildings in which any part of the wine-making process takes place, and the constant recurrence of rotting heaps of the refuse matter

of the pressed grape under every wall and hedge in the neighbourhood of each "fattoria" —and the notions connected with the so be-poetized vintage, will be easily understood to be none of the pleasantest in the minds of those acquainted with its sights and smells.

While a great portion of the world of Florence were thus "out of town"—scattered among those innumerable villas which stud the Valdarno so thickly, as to have suggested Ariosto's well-remembered saying, that if brought together they would make two Romes —the young Tuscan Parliament was labouring hard at its new vocation. And very up-hill, perplexing sort of work did the improvised legislators find this same constitutionalism. Grievous was the amount of unproductive talk performed under a hot sun, by hard-working senators and conscientious deputies, in the all too fluent idiom of that land which was once designated as the "bel paese là dove 'l *sì* suona," but might now be more appropriately called the land "dove il *nò* suona." So divided was opinion throughout the country!—so contradictiously disputatious a spirit was prevalent!—so abundant were the objectors

and obstructors, and so rare were the actors capable of accomplishing anything!

The continually reiterated objection urged by those who view unfavourably the recent Italian movement, that the Italians are unfit for self-government, and should not be intrusted with it till they know how to use it, has always reminded me of the old Greek fable of the man who would not get into the water until he could swim. A people can only become fit for self-government by practising it. And it is tolerably clear that the prudent individual in the fable never got into the water at all. A certain period of risk and difficulty must be passed through in either case before the desired condition can be arrived at. But it must be admitted that the present condition of Tuscany is calculated to put to a severe trial the steadfastness of those who hold these opinions, and to test rather rudely the strength of their faith; for the self-government of the Tuscans is becoming marvellously like no government at all. Coercion of any kind is daily becoming more unpopular and less possible. And if we continue to advance in our present direction, it will soon come to every man doing that

which is right in his own eyes. Yet Florence, as I have said, is almost as tranquil as it used to be. That is to say, that, unlike Leghorn and Lucca, little or no actual violence has been committed by the Florentines. They are an essentially quiet and gentle people, averse to violence and strife. How changed, the reader will say, from those violent and energetic republicans, who made their city the continual battle-field of rival factions—whose family feuds shook Italy from end to end? Yes; changed indeed! so all-powerful is the influence of institutions! At the present moment, the quiet habits and traditional tranquillity of the people seem the only preservatives against scenes of tumult and disorder. The utterly powerless condition of the government has been most strikingly and unfortunately manifested in its dealings with the rebellious Livornese. Another curious instance of the strange position of the governing powers here in a smaller matter was related to me. All the hot politicians of Lucca used to meet daily at a certain coffee-house at the hour when the Florentine papers arrived, to hear the news. As all could not read at once, and many could not

read at all, some strong-lunged individual used to read the articles of most interest *pro bono publico*. Gradually this office devolved upon one individual, who came to be looked upon as public reader; so much so, that on a political society being formed of the frequenters of the coffee-house, this man was appointed newspaper reader, with a salary of half-a-dollar a day. The coffee-house was soon found to be too small for the meeting of the society, and a large locale was found for the purpose. But ere long the nature of its proceedings was such, that it was found necessary to suppress it. Upon which the reader, thus finding his occupation gone, clamorously demanded *compensation* for his "vested right." To this the government literally found themselves obliged to accede; and he absolutely remains in the enjoyment of a government pension as ex-newspaper reader to a private society suppressed for sedition.

Meanwhile, the Florentine populace, much after the manner of their rulers, though they do nothing, talk a great deal. The dead walls of the city are of invaluable utility as a means of giving an innoxious vent to much patriotism

and more discontent, and as a medium for the expression of opinion on all sorts of subjects. If the entire contents of these sibylline manifestations of wishes, thoughts, and opinions, were taken collectively as the expression of the mind of the people of Florence, our gentle Florentines might be set down as the most bloody-minded nation of exterminators extant. The votaries of Thuggee themselves would hardly appear more universal dispensers of death and destruction. "Morte ai Republicani!"—"Morte ai Ministri!"—"Morte ai Livonensi!"—"Morte ai Tedeschi!"—"Morte a Carlo Alberto!"—"Morte a Radetzki!"—"Morte a Guerrazzi!" &c. &c.: and lastly, I observed yesterday this edifying bit of piety, "Morte a quelli che trattano male Iddio!!" The most approved new term of abuse to be found *passim* in this mural literature is "codino;" "tailed one," that is, literally,—or "old pigtail," as it may be more freely rendered. The sense attached to the term in the public mind seems to be that of old, obsolete, behind-hand, retrograde—tory, as we would say, or "oscurantista," as they say at Rome. All Austrians are naturally and ne-

cessarily "codini." Most members of the Tuscan Government have unfortunately turned out to be "codini." If they were to talk of taking immediate measures to arm the population (of Tuscany!) for the total expulsion of every "barbarian" from Italy, they would no longer be "codini." Yet, when, some time ago, the ministry, eager to vindicate themselves from the crushing accusation of *codinism*, in dutiful obedience to the will of the sovereign people caused lists to be opened throughout Tuscany for the inrolment of volunteers to fight in the sacred cause of Italian independence, some two hundred names were all that could be collected! The fact is unfortunately significative, without any attempt on my part to point the moral of it.

One other little anecdote I must give you, as one of those straws which curiously indicate the set of the wind of public feeling here—that "popularis aura" which, beginning now to blow for the first time after so many years in Italy, puffs and veers about as yet with all the unsettled and profitless violence of a storm wind, instead of the valuable and useful regularity of the monsoon. The circumstance in

question occurred the other day. A maid-servant, who had always been a very regular attendant at mass, one Sunday morning, on her mistress telling her that she might now go out to church, replied that she did not wish to go to church, that it was considered "codini," that the people called her Austrian for going to mass, and that she did not mean to do so for the future.

Another manifestation of the inordinate "cacoethes loquendi" which has invaded this people, is seen in the extraordinary multiplication of newspapers published in Florence. Four or five new journals have started into existence since I sent you some months ago a *catalogue raisonné* of the Florence periodical press. The *Conciliatore*, a daily paper, has since then commenced its career. Its name, at least, indicates a laudable ambition; and if it should accomplish in any degree the mission which it thus professes to have undertaken, it will indeed be of greater service to Italy than all that has yet been published by her young newspaper press. Then, of lesser note and smaller pretensions, with less laudable intentions, and addressing themselves to a different

audience, we have the *Stenterello*, the *Lampione*, the *Italia Nuova*, and the *Voce del Popolo*. These publications are sold for about three farthings each. The doctrines they teach are not, it is to be feared, calculated to advance the cause of rational liberty and progress in Italy; and the extreme probability that, "deficiente crumenâ," they will not be able to maintain a long existence, is the pleasantest circumstance connected with them.

Among other unreasonablenesses and childish absurdities, the Italians have lately taken it into their heads to be exceedingly angry with England:—for what deeds of omission or commission it would be hard to say. They have, however, discovered, it would seem, that England fears the rivalry—maritime, commercial, and industrial—which Italy would be in a position to sustain against her if once the Peninsula were constituted into a great, powerful, and united people! It is almost incredible that an idea so absurd should find any one ignorant enough to entertain it. But I am sorry to say that the *Patria*, which has always hitherto been esteemed the most moderate, serious, and enlightened journal of Italy,

contained the other day an article in which, among other violent abuse, England is upbraided as a nation of shopkeepers, who would with equal readiness deal in hardware and in human flesh, and who would sacrifice the happiness and prosperity of a nation to the chance of selling an additional yard of calico.

I could scribble on to you a variety of other small matters, all more or less interesting, as throwing light on the state of men's minds and the position of the social machine here,—but I fear my letter has already exceeded my usual limits, and perhaps those of your tolerance.

LETTER IX.

Zurich.

THERE has hardly, perhaps, as yet, elapsed time enough since Switzerland was to an Englishman even as Herne Bay or Brighton, for me to write of it as I might of Palmyra or Thebes. But really, things look as if such would ere long be the case. I seem to be travelling through a deserted country—so sad a "world too wide" for their shrunk customers are all the preparations and arrangements for tourists and pleasure-hunters. I feel tempted to exclaim with Alexander Selkirk—*vel quasi*,—

"I am monarch of all I survey;
My claims there is none to repel;
From Lake Leman to Zurich's fair sea
I am lord of each boat and hotel."

I find myself the solitary tenant of vast *salles-à-manger* calculated for the reception of a hundred guests,—landlords receive me as the lost traveller in the Desert welcomes a single drop of water;—and Switzerland, from one end to the other, is lamenting her bereaved condition to the melancholy tune of "Nobody coming to visit me, nobody coming to *pay!*"

In truth, the disturbed condition of Europe has already read this country a severe lesson on the blessings of civil order, and the evils arising from its violation in any part of the civilized world. It is curious to observe the exceedingly close connexion which the locomotive and commercial habits of modern civilized life have knit between all the portions of Europe, as shown in the various effects produced upon them by the wars and rumours of wars that have disturbed quite distant members of the great family. Countries which at first sight would appear least liable to be affected by the events passing at a distance, are as much shaken by the concussion as those nearest to it. One pebble is thrown into the water, and the whole surface of the lake is in a few minutes rippled by the

increasing circles of movement produced thereby.

It is necessary to see Switzerland as she now is, in order to estimate rightly the immense amount of activity and profitable employment afforded her every summer by the shoals of English travellers who annually sweep over her roads, steamboats, and hotels, with the securely-expected regularity of the migratory tribes of air or ocean. Like the fertilizing overflow of the Nile, the equally rich flood of English is annually looked for as a most important source of wealth and prosperity. And now it is suddenly and almost entirely cut off. It is to be hoped that at least—on the principle of its being "an ill-wind that blows *nobody* good"—our own mountain-touring districts of Cumberland, Wales, and Scotland, are finding the benefit of the compulsory home-keeping of our million tourists.

Running from the summer heat of Italy at the end of June, I entered Switzerland by the Pass of the Bernardin (decidedly the richest of all the Alpine passes in fine waterfalls),—and halted for awhile at Thusis, at the foot of the Via Mala. Here I found a scene which

reminded me of what I had often seen in the Western States of North America, and as often in still earlier days read of in Virgil's picture of the busy doings of Dido's workmen in building their new town. Thusis had the misfortune, three years ago, to be burnt down almost entirely. An individual who had insured his house highly, set fire—as was most credibly supposed, though proof could not be found—to his own tenement, at about three o'clock on a Sunday afternoon. A very strong wind—one of those impetuous blasts that frequently sweep through the narrow gorge of the Via Mala—was blowing with much fury at the time; and before sun-down the whole town, with few exceptions, lay in ashes. It is now rapidly recovering from its misfortune. The hostelry in which I found quarters was barely —or rather was not—completed, and had as yet no sign. It is now the "Via Mala,"—so named by your humble servant, at the request of mine host, Christian Schreiber, a very excellent good fellow, and most admirable companion in a ramble through any part of the Canton of Graubünden, of which he has much historical as well as topographical knowledge.

If ever you pitch your tent for awhile at Thusis, I bespeak your patronage for the "Gasthaus zur Via Mala."

Christian Schreiber's house might have been built, I should think, in most parts of England, for 800*l.* at the outside. In this remote valley, where wood and stone are both at hand and abundant, he assured me, to my great surprise, that it had cost him 1200*l.* The ironwork, he said, was very expensive: adding, indeed, that English ironware might be had at little more than half the price; but that it was so good-for-nothing that nobody would use it, and that he and his neighbours preferred purchasing the wrought iron of their own smiths at nearly double the cost. Here, thought I, is a hint for Birmingham!

The Graubündners are, in spirit as well as in form, thorough republicans. My host, Christian Schreiber, who had just built his house at a cost of 1200*l.* without running in debt or borrowing a penny, or selling a rood of his land, as he told me, kept also a shop, as well as an hotel. He was likewise a landed proprietor, cultivating his own estate with seven horses, all in fine condition, and plainly

bespeaking the general well-being of the master; was a well-educated, well-informed, and really gentlemanlike-mannered man,—a great sportsman withal,—and told us of "his friend the colonel," who had given his wife houseroom at the time of the fire, till he could find shelter for her.

A thrifty, tidy, active little body was this same wife; whose position in Christian Schreiber's household was strikingly characteristic of that primitive and imperfect state of civilization which always assigns an inferior station to the woman. My host and hostess were a young couple, apparently much attached to each other; and the inferiority of station that I speak of was observable rather in the difference of their manner to me and my companions than in their intercourse with each other. He always spoke to us—though with courteous respect at first and cordial kindness as we became better acquainted—with the air and bearing of an equal. She, as evidently, though equally kindly in manner, addressed us as superiors. He would draw a chair and sit down for a little chat. She, though nowise unwilling to converse, always remained

standing. And it may be observed that this difference could not arise from any original inferiority of station on her part, for her father was one of the principal people of the little town. So certain is it that the due recognition of the social equality of the sexes is one of the latest products of improved civilization. Distress from poverty appeared to be unknown in the district. The wages of unskilled labour are about one shilling and fourpence a day, and the supply is below the demand. In various parts of the Canton of Graubünden fertile land is uncultivated for want of hands. Thus, much of the harder and lower kinds of manual labour is performed by Italians from parts of Piedmont and from the neighbourhood of Como. Thus, also, when the tremendous operation of piercing the present road of the Splügen through the previously inaccessible rocks of the awful defile of the Via Mala was accomplished about thirty years ago, the workmen employed were almost entirely Italians. The Graubündners, even for double pay, would not engage in any such perilous work. A great many lives were lost. The men were obliged to work at the blasting of the rocks

suspended by cords from the top of the cliffs over the fearful abyss below. And it continually happened that the fragments of rock, sent flying in all directions by the springing of mines, cut the cords and precipitated the unfortunate men into the gulf beneath.

The valley of Domleschg (pronounced Domleesh), at the head of which Thusis stands, and through which the Hinter Rhine runs, affords an unusually good opportunity of observing the social results of the two rival faiths —the Catholic and the Reformed. The domains of each are most curiously intertwined. One village is Catholic and another Protestant—scarcely any two together being of the same faith throughout the entire valley. Another still more unusual singularity is, that all these little communities are divided from each other by differences of race and language as well as of religion. German is spoken in one parish and Romansch in the next. For the most part the Romansch villages are Catholic, and the German communities Protestant; though this is not in every instance the rule. The superior prosperity, wealth, cleanliness, and respectable appearance of the Pro-

customs are very remarkable. The numerous convents of the Romish faith tell severely against the well-being of its followers—especially in a country where labour is scarce, and where more is to be done than there are hands to accomplish.

The existence of these Romansch communities in this remote valley of the Alps, is indeed a curious phenomenon for the consideration of the philologer and linguistic antiquary. Tradition says that they are Tuscans, and their name is no other than a corruption of Tuscan. Rhætus, a chief of the Etruscans, was, we are told, driven from his country by the invasion of the Gauls, B.C. 587, and established himself in this valley: where he built the castle whose remains are still visible on a remarkable isolated rock standing boldly out from the mountains behind it, at an elevation of some four hundred feet above the river, at the very opening of the gorge of the Via Mala. This rock still retains the name of Rhætia, or "Rhætia alta," as "Rhætia ima" is perpetuated in that of Rhetzuns, another town still in habitable order, which guards the lower entrance into the valley. By the

origin of these settlers, however, what it may, it is very certain that the dialect spoken by them, and termed Romansch, is nothing but a corrupted Latin, with such additions to it as modern necessities and increased communication with other peoples have introduced. The people of the Engadine, or upper valley of the Inn, speak a dialect still more nearly approaching the written Latin familiar to us: and it has been thought not improbable that their speech may be much the same as that of the lower orders of the Roman people at the period of Rome's power. The mere fact, however, of their local remoteness from the capital, as well as that of their diversity of race, will appear sufficient to make this seem unlikely to those whose wanderings have given them an opportunity of observing how invariably popular dialects of the same language differ from each other with the slightest difference of race, and even with any considerable distance of situation. That the language now spoken in the Engadine may be very much what it was in the palmy days of the Roman empire is by no means unlikely; and it is also probable that it may not differ from the Latin spoken at that period

by the populace of Rome more than many of the Italian dialects now differ from the classic Italian of the educated classes in Tuscany. But this is allowing it a very considerable latitude of divergence.

Just examine as a curiosity, for instance, the following specimen of a provincial dialect, as an example of the degree of degradation to which remoteness of district may subject a language. It is selected from a little book printed in the dialect of the Novarese, which is in use around the southern shores of Lago Maggiore:—

"An seu ban ch' bsognava fe d' pi, ma l' è stacc n' improvisada compati ampò, e accettè o nost bon cheur. E s' ov fa bsogn d' quaicos cha jaba mandè a ca mia; l' è vei ch' è ampò da lonz, ma ciamè d' Gelind, ch' ticc av mostreran; e col ch' av digh, n' el digh mia per sirimonia."

Which strange gibberish done literally into English means as follows:—"I know well that I ought to do more, but it has been done on the spur of the moment; have a little indulgence and accept our good intentions. And if there is need of anything, you have only to send to my house. It is true it is

rather far; but call Gelind, whom everybody will point out to you; and what I have said I have not said for ceremony."

With this key you will easily trace the divergence of this vile patois from the "dolce favella" of Tuscany. You will perceive that it has been formed almost entirely by elision, and by slovenly, inarticulate pronunciation; and you will find a trace here and there of the process by which French grew out of an abusive and degraded Latin. The little book from which the above is taken is in itself a curiosity. It contains one of the old mysteries or plays from holy writ, recently printed for circulation among the peasantry of the Piedmontese valleys. It is merely a reprint of previous editions continually repeated and as continually exhausted; for these old plays are still the favourite reading of the inhabitants of these secluded districts. The passage above quoted is part of the speech of a peasant to St. Joseph, offering all the assistance in his power to the Virgin, who is represented as on the eve of giving birth to the divine Child, and wholly unprovided with any of the necessary preparations for such an event. The

subject of the play is the birth of our Saviour and the slaughter of the innocents by Herod. St. Joseph, the Virgin, Herod, and the angels, express themselves in good Italian. But the peasants, who sustained a considerable part of the dialogue, all talk Novarese, as above. The result of this, and of the extreme homeliness and familiarity of their sentiments and expressions, produces a strange effect.

To return, however, to the subject which led me to speak of this little book,—I will now give a line or two of Romansch, that you may see how far it is likely that that may not differ more from the old spoken Latin than the Novarese does from good Italian. Some allowance must, of course, be made for the action of time on the Romansch dialect; as even in these remote valleys modern ideas and things will insinuate themselves and be talked of. The following lines are taken from a Romansch newspaper published at Coire.

"Pius ei il can della Baselgia Catholica; sia honur e sia gloria ei perquei era la honur e gloria dil Catholicismus. Tgei Papa ha acquistau en tuttas parts dil mund pli grond num e profunda veneraziun che *Pio Nono?* L'America termetta in ambassadur per metter giu al Papa sias cordialas gratulaziuns; l'Engheltiara,

nua che la correspondenza cun Roma era schiglioc scamondada sut peina de mort, e la Terchia igl inimitg mortal dil Pontificat, retscheiven ussa Nunzis papals."

I have selected a passage here of which you will probably be able to make out the sense for yourself. It will be observed that in two or three instances the forms approach those of the Spanish,—which has always been recognised as the most lineal descendant of the Latin.

This talk about dialects and their differences has left me no room to tell you all that I had intended about the primitive town of Coire,—with its protestant population and its catholic cathedral, bishop's palace, and seminary, looking old-fashioned, dirty, picturesque, and catholic, on a hill, all by themselves, inclosed within their own walls. A regular little *imperium in imperio* is the small knot of catholic population in Coire; which consists of little more than the establishments I have enumerated and their hangers on.

A bustling, active little man, a member of the "Great Council" of the Canton, and as such entitled to be addressed as "Your Wisdom," told me of a decree just passed by

the Council, disqualifying all nobles from taking any part in public affairs unless they would drop the "Von" and relinquish all claim to social distinction. "His Wisdom" talked with much satisfaction of the deeds of "our troops,"—the Grandbündners, that is,—in helping to put down the Sönderbund;—spoke of new projects of progress and improvement; and showed me numbers of two new journals recently started at Coire. This little town, with a population of less than 5000, has now nine newspapers, weekly and semi-weekly, including one in the Romansch tongue. In short, all here was life, progress, and movement. I ascended the hill, passed under the old feudal archway which separates the little host of catholics from their fellow-citizens below, and there I saw a Franciscan monk lazily sauntering in the sunshine across the court which separates the cathedral from the bishop's palace. On being accosted, he, too, talked willingly enough of the antiquities in the sacristy—pixes dating from the fourth century—a cope brought from Jerusalem by the Crusaders—of the head of St. Lucius, the British king, there enshrined—of the cathedral,

which was built crooked instead of straight in memorial of the bending of our Saviour's head to the right when on the cross,—and other suchlike old-world *tromperie*. Truly, "His Wisdom" at the foot of the hill and "His Reverence" on the top were two types of the Present and the Past contrasted and strongly marked enough!

Of Zurich, to whose splendid new post-office I am about to commit this letter, I have left myself room to say but few words. A few words, however, are sufficient to characterize prosperity, wealth, and happiness. No ingredients are less picturesque for either pen or pencil. Active, clean, industrious, smiling, and comfortable, ultra-protestant Zurich sits on the fertile bank of her gentle lake, and enjoys the prosperity of which the foundations were laid for her by the struggles and sufferings of Zuinglius and many another citizen patriot and martyr in the cause of temporal and spiritual liberty. The French have a proverb which says, "grossier comme un Zurichois;" but there are few or no provincial towns in France which possess such ample preparations for education and intellectual pursuits as these

good, fat burghers have provided for themselves and their children. It is true that society at Zurich is not brilliant. Balls are rare, and parties are chiefly confined to small meetings among intimate friends. But numerous booksellers' shops, well supplied with German and French literature, chiefly the former,—extensive educational institutions for all classes on the most large and liberal scheme,—a reading-room supplied with 250 of the best periodicals of Europe, including the *Athenæum*, *Literary Gazette*, *John Bull*, *Examiner*, *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh*,—various public libraries, containing above 80,000 volumes,—and philanthropic institutions of all sorts, are sufficient to prove that the burghers of Zurich are not so "*grossiers*" as to think of nothing but their woollens and calicoes.

LETTER X.

Lucerne, August 11.

It is impossible to imagine a stronger contrast, or one more instructive in many respects, than that presented by the two neighbouring towns, Zurich and Lucerne. The former, as I described it in a previous letter, is all prosperous activity, movement, and progress. Modern ideas are on all sides visible in their embodied results; and the community is evidently alive with the rapid, fervid life of the middle of the nineteenth century. The reverse of all this is as evidently the case at Lucerne.

Picturesque, unchanged, quaint old Lucerne! She sits at the extremity of her exquisitely lovely lake,—girdled in by her circlet of battlemented old walls, with their rich array of turreted peak-roofed towers,— as feudal in

appearance, as medieval in her physiognomy, as if her mailed warriors were still fighting for the faith on the field of Cappel with the crop-eared burgher heretics of Zurich.

A European reputation for picturesqueness seems to be as capriciously bestowed, and as accidentally acquired, as many another more important reputation. Many a lovely spot is in the predicament of the heroes before Agamemnon, who missed their meed of fame, "caruerunt quia vate sacro." Not that I mean to insinuate either that Lucerne and its beauties are altogether unknown, or that I am the "divine bard" who is to rescue them from oblivion. But the place certainly has never been be-rapturized and tourist-haunted as many a far less beautiful one has. The banks of its lakes—decidedly, in my opinion, the most lovely in Europe—are not covered with villas and pretty cottages, in answer to the demand of summer ruralizers,—Dame Nature's carpet-knights, who "love her in her wilder mood" as seen from the vine-grown porch of a pretty boudoir, and delight for three months in rural pursuits as typified by strawberries and cream! No! Interlacken,

Chamouny, Como, and Lake Leman have the vogue, and the flock of summer tourists always religiously pass through the gap in the hedge which the bell-wether first selected. Yet not even Salzbourg itself, that boasted "El dorado des paysagistes," deserves the title more truly than does Lucerne. The Prout*ist* may revel to his heart's content in quaint old gabels, gothic fountains, and innumerable turrets of every conceivable form and dimension. Canaletti's self might have fallen in love with the deep blue waters of the rushing Reuss, their long bridges, and mirrored buildings. The richly-wooded, velvety green banks of the Lucerne end of the lake would have afforded inexhaustible studies to a Ruysdael; while the savage shores of its upper waters and the seamed sides of old storm-wrapped Pilatus might well excite the imagination and give aliment to the genius of a Salvator.

But I must not bore you with ecstasies on beauties, which I should not have mentioned at all, had I not been led to observe how much reason the artist and lover of the picturesque have to rejoice in that absence of civilizing progress which to the philanthropist and the

philosopher must be a matter of regret. Alas! why are the useless and inconvenient constructions of past ages so very charming to the eye, while the comfortable utilitarian tenements of our own day are lumpish, formal, tidy, and hideous? The poet may — nay, must—quit the old worn paths of chivalric romance, and all the time-hallowed garniture of the Past, to seek his inspiration in the passions and interests of the Present. Must it be, that the works of man's hand can never be fit for the purpose of the artist till they are good for little or nothing else?

Most certain it is, that active Zurich has lost for the artist, by its improvements, all that stationary Lucerne has kept by improving nothing. Zurich, preferring light, air, health, and plenty of room, to picturesque effect, has pulled down her walls, and built quantities of fine, large, spruce white new houses. Lucerne is content with her old limits, inhabits her old beetle-browed, low-roomed mansions,—and produces, if not enlightened citizens, at least lovely sketches.

With the rest of its old-world gear, Lucerne has, of course, preserved its old faith. As

Zurich is arch-protestant, so is Lucerne arch-catholic, — as, indeed, the part it played recently in the Sönderbund quarrel has more than sufficiently notified to Europe. Two Sundays passed, the first in the one capital and the second in the other, have appeared to me fertile in contrasts, calculated to set one thinking on the merits and demerits of either system, and on the world-wide difference of individual and national character which they are calculated to produce. In the massive heavy old Minster at Zurich, characterized by Mr. Hope as one of the most remarkable specimens of the early Lombard style, and venerable as the scene of Zwingli's courageous and effective preaching, the Zuricois meet for their weekly worship. It is almost impossible to conceive a building more entirely void of ornament of all sorts. Its internal fitting-up consists of a double file of plain deal benches, with a plain deal desk for the preacher facing them. All possible appeal to the imagination is most carefully eschewed in the ritual of their cold and most uninviting worship. Worship, indeed, strictly speaking, forms but a small portion of the Sunday duties, inas-

much as the far greater part of the time passed in the church is devoted to preaching. The building is generally well filled; but it is to be observed, that the female portion of the congregation is considerably more than half of the entire number.

On the following Sunday, at Lucerne, I heard, in the *ci-devant* Jesuit's Church, a charming mass of Weber's admirably performed by a full orchestra and a very good staff of vocalists. It was a real treat; and truly, if any such adventitious aid towards raising the spirit from earth to heaven be deemed allowable or expedient, sounds more adapted to that end could hardly be imagined. But *is* such aid admissible? Ought our communications with the invisible to be made by the means of the imagination? The cold, reason-nurtured reformer answers—No! and maintains that the result of employing the imagination on any such service will shortly be, that no real communication with the invisible will be accomplished at all. The world's experience has been sadly strong in favour of his opinion: yet it is strikingly observable that this result of an imaginative,

and in some degree sensuous, form of worship does not seem equally certain to follow among all nations. Accustomed as I have been to observe the manifestations of Catholicism in Italy, I could not fail to be struck with this fact as I remarked the congregation at the Jesuits' Church in Lucerne. It should seem that some races, endowed with more spiritual tendencies and capabilities than others, are more safely to be trusted with a system of symbolism. They appear less liable to the danger of substituting the type for the anti-type, and recognising the visible to the exclusion and oblivion of the invisible. Thus, it cannot be doubted by one who has observed the religious aspect of either people, that the Catholicism of the Teutonic races is not the mere idolatry which prevails in the South of Europe. With the amount of doctrinal error involved in the faith of either, I have nothing to do here. I am speaking only of those resulting characteristics which manifest themselves to the eye of the social observer. One of the most remarkable of these is the preference with which Romanism addresses itself to the ear in Germany and to the eye in Italy.

Here, as generally in the countries inhabited by people of the Teutonic race, the celebration of the festivals and pomps of the Catholic Church is plain and simple as regards the visible show, compared with the gaudy displays exhibited in the churches of Italy. The musical portion of the performance, on the other hand, is as preponderant among the Germans. Rare indeed is it in Italy to hear such a mass so performed as that celebrated here last Sunday. A certain amount of expense only can be incurred, of course; and in Italy that is always devoted to a profusion of candles, gaudy hangings, and tinsel upholstery for the churches, banners and crucifixes for the processions, and blazing dresses for the clergy. The devotional elevation of mind producible by music is undoubtedly not wholly spiritual in its nature: but it is very evident that a people, whose faith has to be stimulated and amused by shows and mere spectacle, has fallen to an infinitely lower pitch of sensualism and gross materialism than one which turns to the semi-spiritual resource of the grander class of music.

The reality of this important difference be-

tween the two races might be evinced by the result of a variety of observations, all tending in the same direction, were it not that the subject would lead to too long and too grave a discussion for the present occasion. But it may be observed, that the difference in question is clearly one of *race*, and not of nation; and that the investigation of its causes would belong rather to the physiologist than to the political inquirer.

The church in which I heard the magnificent service I have been speaking of is still called the "Jesuits' Church," although, as all the world knows, its late occupants have been driven forth from Swiss soil. The good folks of Lucerne, Catholic as they are to the backbone, make very little secret of their delight at the departure of the reverend fathers. No more sudden arrests without rhyme or reason! —no more domestic *surveillance* and *espionnage!*—no more interdiction of all innocent and rational amusement! The theatre is about to open once more! Mothers have in various instances recovered *well-dowered* daughters whom the influence of the Fathers had persuaded to quit the parental roof for the cloister.

An infinity of stories are told, now that men's tongues are freed, of all the absurdities which the fanatic devotion of the bigoted disciples of the Jesuit fathers led them to commit. One young lady is pointed out who would not wash her hand for days after a reverend Jesuit confessor had touched it! Others found parties and balls grow dull,—while nothing seemed to afford them so much amusing excitement as going to confession! Others, again, were so anxious to possess some precious memorial of their reverend friends, that they were known to sweep up with pious care the snuff which fell between the noses and fingers of these holy men, and preserve little packets of it as amulets in their bosoms! It is but fair, as the same time, to state in favour of the male population of Lucerne, that I do not hear of any gentleman, young or old, sweeping up Jesuitical snuff, or refusing to wash off the touch of a Jesuit's hand. And as for the reverend confessors and their female penitents, alas! can we not furnish an abundance of companion-pictures from our own social annals, or from those of many another country,—all combining to show that priestly guile ever

finds its readiest victims among the same class of human beings?

Among a people circumstanced and characterized as are the Lucernois, a great variety of old-world superstitions, dead or dying elsewhere, are still in full authority and vigour. Among these is one practice, which it occurred to me to witness last night in a very striking manner. I had been taking an evening walk along the road to Adligenschwyl—which forms a magnificent terrace commanding the lake, Mount Pilate, and the range of the Uri and Bernese Oberland peaks—and was returning towards the town, much enjoying the clearness of the distant glaciers as they showed rose-coloured in the light of the setting sun. It was as fine a summer evening as could be imagined. I passed through the cloistered Hof-Kirche yard,—where a loitering devotee or two were sprinkling the graves of their lost ones with holy water, which is always at hand there for the purpose; and had reached the long covered bridge which, crossing the extreme end of the lake, connects the Hof-Kirche and the houses round it with the rest of the town. There, with a suddenness scarcely

credible to those who have never witnessed a similar phenomenon, the whole scene became in an instant changed. All was suddenly as black as it had been bright and smiling a moment before. The lake seemed ink; and behind the storm-seamed mass of old Pilatus—the unfailing and notorious storm-brewer of this region—an ominous mass of clouds as black as night appeared to be descending rapidly and enfolding peak after peak in their thick veil. There was no mistaking the rapid approach of one of those violent thunderstorms for which the "Lake of the Four Cantons" is famous—or infamous, if you please. The worthy Lucernois has no doubt that they all proceed from the restlessness and malice of the accursed spirit of Pilate;—who, as the tradition goes, after wandering about the world in disconsolate wretchedness for some years, at last came hither and drowned himself in the little lake on the top of the grim mountain which has ever since borne his name. It may, at all events, be confidently advanced in favour of the theory that almost every storm that visits the neighbourhood of Lucerne, first gathers itself around the grey head of

Pilatus, and descends thence upon the low-lands.

The covered bridge was an excellent spot to watch the magnificent spectacle which I knew was about to commence. So, instead of hurrying home, I paused there, — gazing out on the now agitated lake and the masses of mist where the mountains had been five minutes before. The performance soon began. The curtain of thick darkness was rent asunder by a flash of fire-red lightning, which for a moment or two showed the whole amphi-theatre of mountains in a strong lurid light, such as I had thought could be seen nowhere save in the last scene of a melo-drama. Then all was dark again, and silent for awhile. The wind itself seemed to pause in expectation. Then it came—such an explosion of thunder as I never before heard, shaking every timber of the bridge beneath me, waking every echo from the reverberating sides of the mountains far and near, and finally retreating with low muttered growling into the dark recesses of the Bay of Uri. Then, suddenly from every tower and steeple of Lucerne boomed out such a clangour of bells as might indeed have scared

the spirit of the storm, if aught earthly could be supposed to do so.

> "'Twixt blinding flash and stunning peal
> A sobbing voice of bells afar,
> Crying against that savage war
> With melancholy zeal!"—

as it has been described in an unpublished poem by a friend of mine. And this ancient practice is still in full vigour here, and is never omitted whenever the restless ex-governor of Judea sends a storm down from his mountain to trouble the town and lake. I am aware that the movement of the air caused by a peal of bells may possibly be of some real service in dissipating the electric fluid; as the other ancient practice of ringing the bells in time of pestilence may, it is said, have some effect in purifying the air by disturbing it. But assuredly it is by no such scientific afterthought that the good citizens of Lucerne are influenced.

Can it be credited that until very recently the municipal wisdom of these worthies absolutely forbade the ascent of the ill-omened mountain, in order that the ghost of Pilate might not be needlessly disturbed, and storms thereby increased!

This astounding circumstance will have sufficiently prepared you for the kindred fact of there not being much to say at Lucerne of such means and preparations for educational progress and intellectual amusement as I found at Zurich. One little "lesekabinet" there is; but it is lamentably ill-supplied and ill-supported in comparison with that at Zurich. It boasts thirty-seven papers; of which twenty-five are Swiss, (three in the French language, one in the Italian, and the remaining twenty-one in German,) ten German journals, and two French,—the *Débats* and *Constitutionnel*. The Lucerners do not read any English publication. Nor has the town any daily paper of its own; although many of the Swiss towns of smaller population and importance support one, and often more.

To-morrow I am off to Berne: whence I may perhaps write to you again, should I find aught that I think may amuse you.

LETTER XI.

Berne, August 15.

I WAS not aware, when I wrote to you from Lucerne, that one of the most interesting spectacles in Switzerland, the great federal "Gesang Fest," or national singers' festival, was about to take place in Berne; and it was merely by good fortune that I arrived just in time for it. Sunday and Monday, the 13th and 14th of August, were the days fixed for the celebration; and, on my arrival on the Saturday evening, I found the whole town in an intense bustle of hospitable cares and preparations, and every one on the tiptoe of expectation for what the morrow was to produce.

But before proceeding to give you some account of the highly interesting and truly

local and characteristic festival which has occupied me, as well as all Berne, for the last two days, it will be as well to enter into some explanation of the nature and object of the meeting.

That Switzerland is celebrated for its native melodies and its mountain peasant vocalists, everybody knows; and many may be also aware that a great number of societies exist in the towns, as well as in many of the remote Alpine valleys, for the cultivation of part singing, and the social enjoyment of their musical talents. With a view to the encouragement of such talents, and of emulation among the societies, it was determined, some years ago, to institute a grand biennial general meeting, at which the different associations should contend for prizes, to be awarded by competent chosen judges to the best performance;—not, be it understood, to the best individual performer, but to the company who should be considered to have executed the best performance, as a whole. To this was soon added a general concert of pieces sung by all the assembled singers together. The prizes are given by

the different bodies themselves, according to their means and liberality, or by any other persons who may feel inclined to encourage the cultivation of the national music. Thus, upon this occasion, among the other things, was a very handsome silver cup, given by the ladies of Berne. All the objects in this way assembled—including a most heterogeneous variety, such as lamps, boxes of cigars, books, &c.—are placed at the disposition of the general committee, and are by them distributed, according to the award of the umpires. Four "prizes" only are given; the other things are distributed under the title of "Ehren-gabe," honorary gifts.

On the Saturday evening, as I have said, all was bustle and animation. The different societies were arriving rapidly, one after another, and were welcomed each with a salvo of artillery, as they entered the town, which was most gaily bedecked, in honour of the occasion. An immense profusion of garlands of moss and flowers festooned the fronts of the houses, were hung in graceful arcades across the streets, and draped every fountain and public edifice. With these were

intermixed a variety of inscriptions, such as the occasion would naturally suggest. Only over the handsomely-garlanded Post-Office of Berne, was the motto, rather smelling of the shop, and indicating an eye to business, in the midst of the revels, "Unity of Postal Arrangements throughout Switzerland." Many of the associations arrived in most picturesque guise: some in huge wagons, ornamented with gay flags and garlands; others decked with some uniform badge, as the "Alpen-rose," &c.; and some passed up the High Street, chanting, at the top of their lungs, some joyous mountain melody, or exchanging the Jodel-cry with one another, or with the members of a rival society. The principal business of this first evening was the assignation of quarters to the numerous guests who were thronging into the city. A lodging-committee had been appointed, to whom all the good citizens hospitably inclined to offer a bed or beds to any of the singers, had notified their capabilities. And thus a sufficient amount of gratuitous accommodation had been placed at the disposal of the committee, for the reception of all the

strangers. The number of singers who arrived to take part in the festival on this occasion, was above fifteen hundred—a larger assemblage than had ever mustered before; but the Bernese hospitality sufficed for all. The committee remained sitting the whole of the Saturday evening, at the Casino; and as fast as the arrivals took place, they were directed thither,—where they received tickets for lodgings; badges to be worn on the coat-breast, during the festival, consisting of a harp embroidered in white, upon a bit of red ribbon; and the words and music of the pieces to be sung by the united assembly.

The persons admitted to take part in the festival, besides the singers themselves, consisted of the various committees to whom the management of it was entrusted, certain specially invited honorary guests, "Ehrengäste," and a limited number of subscribers who were holders of tickets at six francs each. These were in such request, that on my arrival on the Saturday evening, it was not without difficulty that I succeeded in obtaining one.

No inconsiderable portion of the funds at

the disposal of the committee must, I should think, have been expended in gunpowder; for there was a far greater quantity of cannon-firing than one might have supposed agreeable to an assemblage of harmonious souls. The Sunday was ushered in with tremendous "Glockengeläute and Kanonendonner," as per programme. The various companies assembled on the fine terrace behind the Minster, which overlooks the Aar and the lower town, and thence proceeded in procession to the "Fest-platz." This *festival-ground* had been chosen and prepared on the elevated tableland in the immediate neighbourhood of the observatory, —a truly magnificent spot, commanding a view not only over the town but of the distant snowy range of the Bernese Oberland. Here a spacious square had been railed off, and inclosed with festoons of garlands. At the upper part was erected a huge temporary building of boards, profusely decorated with evergreens; and whole miles of garlands hung in arcades. It was built in the form of a cross; and comprised a gallery for music and one for lady spectators, a little theatre for musical and scenic exhibitions, a rostrum for

speeches, and tables sufficient for the accommodation of three or four thousand persons. In the open space in front of this building was a small raised hustings for the proclamation of the winners of the prizes, &c.

The commencing business of the meeting on its arrival here, after due admiration had been lavished on the beauty of the spot and the prettiness of the preparations made by the good town of Berne for the reception of their guests, was the salutation of the federal flag, —the going out of the old committee, and the installation of their successors,—a song of welcome sung by the "Berner Liedertafel," or Bernese Society of Vocalists,—a variety of speeches, — much "Kanonendonner," — and lastly, though very far from least, dinner, at mid-day, to which all present sat down in the highest possible good humour. The price of the dinner was fixed at two francs, including a bottle of very tolerable "Sängerwein." A very *recherché* repast could not therefore be expected. But mountaineers generally bring their sauce with them; and, despite the precaution which would have induced more city-bred vocalists to be sparing of food immediately

previous to singing for a prize, all seemed inclined to make an excellent dinner.

And in truth the scene which the immense booth presented during this semi-al-fresco dinner was extremely amusing from its intensely local characteristics and national peculiarities. To the staid and decorum-loving notions of our countrymen the proceedings would have appeared those of drunken bacchanalians, and the entire scene one of the wildest disorder and uproar. But, in truth, nothing could be farther from being the case. I am convinced that during the whole two days of the festival not one of those who took part in it was in any degree intoxicated. But every one laughed aloud who felt inclined to laugh,—every one sang who felt inclined to sing,—and nobody was in the slightest degree checked in giving vent to the mirth and gladness that were in his heart by the thought that his neighbour would think him either childish or indecorous for doing so. The different associations marched up to the tables appointed for them, chanting some gay stave or other,—while the instrumental music in the gallery would cease, to allow their voices to be

heard; and frequently the thousands assembled would pause in their own clamour to listen to a dozen or so of voices singing in concert, and would reward them at the close of their stave with a general cheer. An old gentleman who sat next me at dinner was very eager to inform me that no police or other authority was present to keep order, for that, despite the exuberant jollity of the meeting, the sentiment of the national credit and honour was sufficient to insure the absence of all impropriety.

The singers from St. Gall had brought with them an enormous cut-glass beaker, holding some five bottles or more,—the prize probably in some former melodious contest. This mighty glass—calculated almost to supply a satisfactory draught to that Hollander who wished "that a Dutchman's draught might be as deep as the rolling Zuyder-zee,"—was filled and kept filled, as it was made to circulate from hand to hand, while each in turn was required to hold the goblet in one unshaking hand and take a good pull at its contents. As each drank, a fresh verse of some German bacchanalian ditty was uplifted by the surrounding multitude, and shouted forth in good time

and tune till the glasses on the board rang every one with the mighty reverberation. Another characteristic feature in this Swiss revel was the presence of the gentler sex, not banished to a suffocating gallery, as at our duller and richer banquets,—although there was a gallery for such as chose it,—but seated in abundance by the side of their husbands, brothers, fathers, or lovers. Many were in the various local costumes of the valleys from which they came, and added not a little to the picturesque effect of the scene.

One source of great attraction and curiosity to all present was the exhibition of the prizes and honorary gifts, which were set forth for the inspection of all concerned at the upper end of the building. They included, as I have said, articles of the most heterogeneous description—and some calculated to excite the hilarity of the meeting in more senses than one. Schaffhausen, for instance, had sent two huge barrels of Rhine wine. The barrels were very handsomely made of walnut wood, and were painted and ornamented with various devices and with brass hoops, spigots, &c. Some other more humble minstrels had sent a

barrel of beer, "simplex munditiis," with no ornament about it but the excellence of the liquor inside. One mountain valley had sent a large cheese. The richer city communities had contributed a number of silver cups,—some exceedingly handsome; with books, specimens of Swiss painted wood-work, &c. for the smaller gifts.

At half-past one, four cannon shots gave the signal for leaving the table, and forming in procession for the purpose of proceeding to the Minster, in which the contest was to take place. Eighteen societies competed for the prize:—Zurich, Lucerne, Berne, St. Gall, Solothurn, Schaffhausen, Upper and Lower Aargau, Thun, Interlacken, and some other smaller communities. The natives of Appenzell are amongst the best singers in Switzerland; but somehow or other upon this occasion they had not come in sufficient force to enable them to contend for the prize according to the rules of the assembly. By these it is required that each competing company should be composed of at least sixteen members,—and of the Appenzellers there were but eight present.

In the Minster an immense gallery, occupying nearly half the nave of the large church, had been prepared for the singers, while the ticket holders were below in the body of the building. One after another, in an order determined by that in which they reached Berne, the competing societies came forward from the mass of fifteen hundred singers who stood back, and executed the piece which they had selected as the manifestation of their powers. The umpires guided their decisions by a system of marks;—a certain number being given for each branch of excellence and a certain number deducted for every fault. Then of course the party who has finally the most marks takes the first prize—and so on. The decisions so arrived at were not declared till the evening of the second day:—but I may say here that the Zuricois carried off the first prize. They sang a chorus composed by C. L. Fischer; of which the words were, I believe, new,—and were so much above the average of what "words written for music" generally are, that I send you a translation of them, as a specimen of the poetical part of the materials of the Berne festival. If the rendering has no other

merit, it has at least that of very accurate faithfulness, as to both metre and sense.—

The World is so Fair!

Why stand'st thou, man, with a heavy heart?
The world is all so fair!
The bird, a living song, doth rise
With clear, sweet music to the skies
And blithely warbles to the air—
"The world is so fair! the world is so fair!"

The blossom waits the dawn to see,
Ere she unfold her sanctuary;
Then breathes from her perfumed chalice there—
"The world is so fair! the world is so fair!"

In the silvery tide of the rivulet bright,
Where wave follows wave in the hurry of flight
To the banks, which they sprinkle, in sweet tones they bear—
"The world is so fair? the world is so fair!"

Why stand'st thou, man! so gloom-oppress'd,
And gazest alone through thine own dark breast?
O! give but a look to the joyance rare,
The mirth that encircles thee everywhere!
"The world is so fair! the world is so fair!"

The second prize was awarded to the singers of Ober Aargau. Their performance was a chorus by Kalliwoda, the words by Eberhard. The men of St. Gall took the third prize for

their "Kriegerchor," or War Song,—music by Rücker, words by O. Prechter; and those of Solothurn were rewarded with the fourth, for a short morsel by Cherubini.

After the performance of all the eighteen contending societies had taken place, the order of the day was—back again to the "Festplatz;" then a "social stroll" to a celebrated walk called the "Enge," which commands a magnificent view of the whole chain of the Bernese Alps—an arrangement which, however pleasant in itself, sounds oddly as proposed to a party of fifteen hundred persons. However, some walked, and some did not; some strolled about the town, and some prepared for the inevitable "Abendessen" by retiring to their quarters for a nap.

At seven o'clock four more cannon shots gave the signal for supper. Once again the countless yards of table were spread with fish, beef, bread, green beans, cakes, and, above all, with innumerable bottles of "Sängerwein." And now an apparently endless succession of "Toaste" were to be drunk. They were forbidden at the midday dinner,—all who wished to propose them being requested to reserve

them for the more unrestricted gaiety of the evening meal. Then there were music in the gallery, and singing now at one table and now at another, and little scenes acted on the theatre at the upper end of the huge booth; and, as in the words of the programme, was especially provided and pre-ordained that it should be, "unrestrained hilarity, free, becoming conversation, and cheerful sport, formed the seasoning of the evening." And really, a prettier or more characteristic scene than these two thousand Swiss revellers in their gaily garlanded tent when the moonlight and lamplight lent their fantastic effects to the picture, it would be difficult to conceive.

The next morning — the Monday — was occupied by the singers in rehearsing the concert which they were to perform in the church in the afternoon. Dinner, as yesterday, was ready at noon; and at two all hurried to the Minster for the grand performance of the meeting. This consisted of twelve pieces of music, almost entirely choral, sung by the whole force of the assembly,—amounting, as the reader knows already, to more than fifteen hundred voices. The singing was for the

most part very good, and the *ensemble* was generally wonderful considering the very limited opportunities which the different portions of the colossal chorus had enjoyed of practising together. Here and there a greater degree of precision might have been desired; but the entire effect was, as may easily be imagined, grand and imposing in no common degree.

Between the two parts of the concert it was announced that the Appenzellers, though precluded from engaging in the competition for the prize by the rules of the meeting, yet wished an opportunity of being heard. So about half-a-dozen individuals stepped forward to the front of the gallery, and sang one of the remarkable "Jodelchors" for which Appenzell is especially celebrated. All Europe is now well acquainted with the peculiar harmonised call of the Swiss and Tyrolese mountaineers: but Appenzell is the especial home of the *Jodeln*,—and comparatively few have ever heard it in such perfection as that with which it was sung on this occasion. The upper part was taken by a shepherd of the mountains, whose voice was in quality singu-

larly like the well-known *soprani* of the Papal Chapel,—although there was of course no other resemblance between the performers. The "Jodelchor" drew forth the warm applause of the entire audience,—even despite the regulation which forbids all manifestation of opinion on the part of the public. And after the prizes and honorary gifts had been distributed, a special and exceptional present was made by the Society to the men of Appenzell, as a token of admiration for their Jodeln.

After the concert was over, all went back once more to the "Fest-platz;" and there, from a rostrum in front of the building, the secretary declared the decision of the umpires, and the prizes were distributed amid much "Kanonendonner" and hurrahing. Then, again to supper;—and more hilarity, more *sängerwein*, more toasts, more speeches, more singing, and universal contentment and jollity till the moon began to wane.

The next morning the different companies departed to their various homes, with banners waving and streamers flying, while their musical hosts of Berne accompanied each band

of prize holders to the bottom of the hill at the foot of the magnificent new bridge over the Aar; and there, after singing a stave together, they parted with mutually shouting greetings and anticipations of their next meeting that time two years to come.

LETTER XII.

Interlaken, September 25.

INTERLAKEN is one of the most noted halting-places of that nomade race of English who pass their lives in wandering from one haunt of pleasure to another throughout Europe. To all that much larger class, also, who snatch from the business of life a hurried month or two, to refresh their minds and bodies with a scamper through the most beautiful scenery of the Continent, it is as well, or perhaps better, known than Cheapside. The vale of Lanterbrunnen is little less strange than that of Aylesbury, and the Wengern Alp is as familiar as Highgate. It is not, therefore, with any intention of enlightening you respecting the beauties and attractions of these celebrated spots, that I date a letter hence. But high on

a mountain which overlooks this happy valley, and far above its gay and busy crowds, there exists another gathering of human beings, of a somewhat different description, brought together for a different purpose, and having as little in common with the pleasure-hunting assemblage below as it is well possible for one set of mortals to have with another. And this latter world on the mountain is sufficiently less well known than its neighbour world below to make some account of it not superfluous.

It is on a sunny slope of the Abendberg—so called in contradistinction to a brother mountain to the eastward, named the Morgenberg—that the establishment exists which I wish to introduce to you. There, at an elevation of between three and four thousand feet above the sea-level, a benevolent member of that profession which has produced, perhaps, more pure philanthropists than any other—a physician—has devoted his existence to the foundation and conduct of an establishment for the cure and prevention of cretinism. Few, in these days of travelling, can be altogether ignorant of the meaning of

this term of ominous import; there are few who, in the course of wanderings through some of the many parts of Europe most afflicted with that awful scourge, have not shuddered at the sight of their own human nature disfigured and degraded in the person of the misshapen cretin, and retained a sufficiently strong impression of the fearful sight to render the establishment on the Abendberg an object of interest to them. The majority, however, even of those whose attention may have been attracted to the painful subject, are probably by no means aware of the extent, geographically as well as numerically speaking, of the evil. But when it is known that hardly any country in Europe is free from the stain of cretinism—that, far from being confined to the Alpine valleys which intersect the great chain that forms the backbone of Europe, other districts, in which all the circumstances of physical geography seem to be wholly different, are yet liable to the same malady; that England herself, especially in her south-western counties, is by no means exempt from the affliction—it does seem surprising that the first special establishment for its scientific

treatment should have been founded by the exertions of an individual in the year 1840.

It was at that time that Dr. Guggenbühl, a pupil of the well-known Dr. Schönlein, of Berlin, determined to devote his life and energies to the redemption of these lost outcasts of humanity; to the solution of the scientific problem, how far moral and physical prophylactic agencies might be successfully employed in snatching the infant cretin from the doom impending over him; and to the foundation of an establishment where all such means might be put in action under the circumstances pointed out by science as the most favourable to success. For though nothing had been *done* previous to the foundation of Dr. Guggenbühl's establishment on the Abendberg, much had been *written* on the subject; and science, as well as some degree of occasional empirical experience, had long since indicated the first grand necessity in any attempt of the kind. It is nearly three-quarters of a century since Saussure pointed out, with a convincing amount of evidence, that cretinism is rarely, if ever, found higher than an altitude of three thousand feet above the sea.

Further observation, and some partial experiments, have since proved that even temporary removal during infancy, to a high situation on the mountains, produces at least temporary improvement. The lack of accommodation in Switzerland for remaining on the mountains in the winter, had hitherto prevented more than a temporary removal from the deleterious influences which produce the evil. But Dr. Schausberger has cited cases from Pechlarn, on the Danube, in which healthy parents who came to settle in that locality had thenceforward only cretin children, while demi-cretin parents who had been born in Pechlarn, but had removed to the hills, had had healthy offspring. Again, Dr. Fodére—whose practice in the Maurienne, one of the regions most afflicted by cretinism, afforded him abundant opportunities of observing all the circumstances connected with its generation—has carefully described the nature of the localities most calculated to foster it. A valley through which the river flows slowly, where the hills are clothed with a rich and thick verdure, where the habitations are surrounded and overhung by fruit-trees, where the direction and position

of the valley is such as to receive the whole of the sun's rays and to be sheltered from sweeping winds, where marshes still further contribute to increase the humidity of the atmosphere —such a spot will be the stronghold of cretinism. It would seem to be produced, in short, by breathing a close, warm, damp air. And the natural conclusion is, that the most successful remedy or prevention would be found in placing the patient under circumstances, as far as possible, the reverse of all this—in a keen, dry mountain air, that is. Remedy or *prevention*, I have said; for it must be observed that, contrary to what used to be, and is still, vulgarly supposed to be the case, it is now satisfactorily established that the infant is not born a cretin, but gradually becomes so; that the mischief commences generally with the second year, and goes on increasing with the growth, until the degradation, mental and physical, is complete.

The object of Dr. Guggenbühl's endeavours, therefore, was to found an establishment for the reception of infants who manifested a tendency to fall into cretinism, or in whom, at all events, the malady was only in its earliest stage of development; and the first requisite

for its foundation was the choice of a fitting locality for the purpose. This the Abendberg seemed to offer in a high degree. The southern slope of this mountain—overlooking one of the loveliest valleys in the world, and surrounded by scenes of a nature peculiarly adapted to excite the faculties of a dulled or slumbering intelligence—unites with the necessary altitude so happy an exposure to the sun, and so complete a shelter from the severer winds, that the climate of the establishment is not injuriously rigorous in winter. The surrounding pasture and garden-ground produces milk, butter, and all sorts of vegetables in abundance; excellent water and plenty of wood are immediately at hand; and, lastly, the geographical position is desirable, as being in the centre of the districts most afflicted with the malady which the establishment is destined to combat.

It was on a lovely morning that I started from the Pension Ober, at Interlaken, to walk to the establishment of Dr. Guggenbühl, on the Abendberg. The walk is not a fatiguing one, although the mountain is very steep, and the elevation to be attained so considerable,

for a well-managed path has been led in zig-zags through the fir woods which, for the most part, clothe the mountain, and the ascent is thus accomplished in the shade, and at an angle not too back-breaking even to town-bred walkers. Those who like not such an enterprise may, with all ease and comfort, ride up and down again. When I reached the opening in the woods which, at about half-way to the summit of the mountain, surround the fields, gardens, and buildings of the establishment, the scene that burst upon my sight was indeed one of no ordinary beauty. The chain of snowy peaks of the Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau mountains—the giants of the Bernese Oberland—are here seen in all their magnificence. Far below, the valley of Interlaken, and the two lakes which give it its name, are seen sleeping in the bosom of the Alps, which surround them. And each morning's sun—often when it is hidden from the inhabitants of the valley by thick mist—is seen rising in brilliant beauty over the snowy peaks of the Uri mountains, and warms the favoured slopes of the Abendberg till it sets in ruddy glory behind the regular-shaped cone of the Niesen, and

the more fantastic forms of its neighbour Stockhorn.

These details of the scenic beauty of the spot selected by Dr. Guggenbühl for his labour of love are, it must be explained, very far from being unimportant accessories to the success of the work in hand. The Doctor assured me that he found almost invariably that the contemplation of some of the majestic and striking phenomena of creation constituted the most powerful stimulant he could apply to the slumbering and deadened condition of intellect which forms the most distressing, and, at the same time, most interesting, branch of the malady of the cretin. Slumbering and deadened, but *not dead.* For one of the conclusions to which his experience has the most surely conducted him is, that the intellect of the cretin exists still—that he is not an idiot —that the malady is wholly physical, and that the functions of the intellect are suspended for want of normal energy in those portions of the organization which form the communication, as it may be represented, of the inner invisible with the outward visible world. The intelligence becomes withered by this state of atrophy;

and, in many cases, the shape of the head indicates the non-development of the brain, as in similar manner any portion of the physical structure wholly thrown out of employment will in time perish away. But the divine spark is still *there*—not extinct, though dormant in the hideously misshapen frame, whose torpid senses and diseased organization refuse to supply it with ideas from without, or to be the medium of any manifestation of existence from within.

It is this conviction especially which has spurred on Dr. Guggenbühl to overcome the many difficulties that have opposed themselves to the realization of his experiment. If, says he, we can only succeed in restoring a tolerably normal physical condition *before* long disuse shall have altogether and finally paralyzed the mind, the mind will begin to show signs of life and action. The first treatment of the cretin child must therefore be wholly physical; and it is only when considerable physical improvement shall have been accomplished, that any useful attempt can be made to awaken the intelligence. Then, the first difficulty is to make the first ideas pass—if such a metaphor is

allowable—along the newly-established and frail cord of communication. Something must be found which can stimulate the attention and awaken the interest of the still lethargic intellect; and in this stage it is that Dr. Guggenbühl has found the grand features of the scenery around him especially useful for this purpose. Often has the magnificent spectacle of the chain of mountain tops to the south of the Abendberg, bathed in the sunset light till their snow seemed rose-coloured, and their bare precipices crimson—often has the storm-wind, sweeping through the pine-woods which clothe the summit above the establishment, been, of all ideas from the world without, the first to penetrate the dull medium of the half-awakened senses of the cretin, and by the avenue of the imagination to reach and stimulate the still lethargic intelligence.

These facts were among the most curious which I learned from the exceedingly interesting conversation of Dr. Guggenbühl; whom I found in the midst of his unfortunate—or fortunate ought I not rather to say?—patients and pupils. On reaching the open door of the modest but roomy and airy building, I

encountered a female servant with a cretin infant in her arms, sent out for the purpose of exposing the child to the breezes which were sweeping the mountain side. I inquired for the Doctor, and was told to walk in and ascend the stairs, and there I should find him. Thus unannounced I entered a large upper room,—and was indeed most singularly impressed with the strange scene which presented itself. From the centre of the ceiling depended a cord, reaching to within two feet or so of the floor, and furnished at the end with a rounded staff about eighteen inches in length. This was a contrivance to enable children unable or unwilling to use their legs (one of the earliest and most ordinary manifestations of cretinism) to take exercise by resting their hands and arms on the staff, and thus swinging to and fro, while the legs trailing on the ground are relieved from the burthen of the tumefied and disproportioned body. An unfortunate creature, a female cretine twenty years old, was thus swinging herself about when I entered. She is the only adult in the establishment; and has been exceptionally received by Dr. Guggenbühl for some special reasons—partly,

perhaps, because her case offers some very rare and interesting surgical peculiarities. She was, I should think, between two and three feet high, horribly deformed, and though able to move about without aid, yet evidently she did so with difficulty. Still, the air and regimen of the Abendberg had not been without effect even in this far-gone case. The complexion was healthy and the eye bright. She had sufficient intellect to go and come as she was bid; and she manifested the strongest affection towards the Doctor. In one corner of the large room was a sort of climbing apparatus for exercising and strengthening the limbs of the children. On the walls were a variety of large prints and representations of various objects, calculated to engage the attention and exercise the nascent powers of discrimination. In one part was a table covered with a variety of weeds, apparently recently gathered from the mountain side. These were for the purpose of teaching some of the more advanced pupils some rudimental notions of botany and vegetable physiology. There were about twenty children scattered in different parts of the chamber, of various ages, from

five to ten. The younger infants were elsewhere. All these were, more or less, manifestly and hideously cretins. A fearful and a painful sight! and yet the tokens of amelioration and progress were so manifest, the beneficence of the undertaking was so palpable, and the cleanliness, the air of being cared for, and the comparative well-being of these children were so great, when contrasted with the revolting condition of the horrible objects which frequently meet the traveller's eye in so many of the Alpine valleys, that to the reflective mind the sight ought to be rather gratifying than painful.

In the midst of his strange schoolroom I found the Doctor walking to and fro, superintending, directing, correcting, instructing, and above all conciliating, the affection of his unengaging pupils by the unvarying gentleness and kindness of his manner. He received me with the greatest urbanity,—was evidently pleased at a stranger's visit to the scene of his obscure but most valuable labours,—and readily entered into conversation on the subject of them. He examined before me one of his most promising pupils, a now apparently

healthy lad of some nine or ten years old. This child had been brought to the establishment when between two and three years old, in a state of rapidly progressing cretinism,—and if left in his native valley would have become an utterly lost creature in body and mind. A number of questions were put to him by the Doctor on subjects connected with natural history. He began with simple notions of the appearance of the mountains, of the nature of their covering of snow, of the temperature on their heights, and thence went on to the nature and composition of our atmospheric air, &c. I thought that the latter part of this instruction was hardly adapted to an intellect which had still to acquire many of the most elemental notions necessary for the everyday conduct of life. But the Doctor assured me that his experience proved to him that the explanation—even somewhat comparatively abstruse—of what meets the eye, constitutes the food most easily taken by the newly-awakened mental powers. The lad in question answered nearly all the questions put to him readily enough; but how far this may have been an exercise of the memory only, and

how far a real action of the powers of the understanding, it was impossible for me to judge.

We then proceeded to view the other parts of the establishment; including ample bathing accommodation, and a magnetico-electric machine arranged for passing a current of electric fluid through the bodies of the patients when in the bath,—a practice which Dr. Guggenbühl stated he had found most serviceable in assisting the process of quickening the torpid vital energies. As we completed our round, the bell rang at midday for dinner; and the Doctor pressed me kindly to dine with him and his family, *and his patients*. I would have done so had I not been expected back by friends at Interlaken. As it was, I left this admirable man, — who, in the prime and springtide of his life, has devoted his entire existence to the obscure and cheerless task of passing his monotonous days, far from all social intercourse, amid a class of beings from the passing sight of whom other men turn with disgust and shuddering, for the pure love of humanity and the strong desire to benefit his fellow-creatures, — with feelings of the liveliest admiration and esteem.

The experiment, however, which Dr. Guggenbühl has thus made, and the highly satisfactory results obtained by him, should—and there is reason to hope will—produce a much more widely extended benefit than any that can be derived from his own individual efforts and from the one humble institution which his energy has succeeded in establishing on the Abendberg. The greatest good resulting from this and from Dr. Guggenbühl's experience and observations is, that they may be considered to have proved experimentally—as I have already said—that cretinism, infallibly and permanently endemic in certain localities, is caused by a given combination of geographical and atmospherical circumstances which are scarcely, if at all, capable of being remedied; that healthy parents will in these localities produce cretin children,—while even cretin parents removed to districts differently circumstanced will have healthy children; that the infant is not born a cretin, but gradually becomes so; that the brain is not, as in the case of the idiot, the seat of any part of the malady, but is, in the words of the Doctor, "plunged in a state of torpor;" and, lastly,

as resulting from these facts, that nothing else is requisite for the eradication of the evil than timely removal of the infant from the local influences which are making a cretin of him. These facts once established, it should follow that every valley so circumstanced as to produce cretinism should be provided by its inhabitants with an asylum, on some neighbouring height, for the reception of infants menaced with cretinism. According to Dr. Guggenbühl, the time necessary for the child to remain in such an asylum would be from three to six years. It is clear that, on the whole, the cost to the community would be far less than that of maintaining during the whole of their wretched lives, a population of cretins, —the burthen of whose support must, of course, in some shape or other, fall on the healthy portion of the inhabitants.

The Governments of Switzerland have not shown themselves insensible to the interest which it behoves them to take in the question. Berne, from the first opening of Dr. Guggenbühl's establishment, accorded him a yearly subsidy of 600 francs. Fribourg, Valais, and St. Gall send children to him at the cost of

their respective cantons. The King of Prussia sends two infants from Neufchatel. It is to be hoped, therefore, that a general and regular system for the abolition of so horrible an infliction will grow out of the seeds so well sown by individual enterprise and beneficence; and that the revolting sight of an adult cretin may, thanks to Dr. Guggenbühl's active philanthropy, be spared, if not to our children, at least to our children's children.

LETTER XIII

Certaldo.

LETTERS which the world has not yet quite forgotten, though they were written some five hundred years ago, have been dated from this obscure village among the Tuscan hills. Their writer was of those who make the spot which they have in the flesh called their home, a shrine for the hero-worship of all succeeding generations; one whose spirit yet lives and has its influence among us; and even across the huge chasm of five centuries, traversed by so few connecting links of thought, feeling, or sentiment, is still sympathetical to every genial and gentle spirit throughout all nations. It is probable that few may need to be told that Certaldo was the home and last resting-place of Boccaccio. But as the memorials,

both material and spiritual, of the gentle Giovanni, which yet survive there, are numerous and interesting, and as the spot lies so far out of the ordinary beat* of tourists, that in all probability not one in ten thousand of the English who visit Italy have been here, I have thought that some account of my excursion hither might be acceptable to you.

October is, perhaps, the pleasantest month in the year for a country excursion in Italy, if it be not among the higher mountains of the Peninsula. There, indeed, it is too late. For such an expedition as the one in question nothing could be more delightful than the bright, clear, and moderately warm October day on which I started from Florence, on my pilgrimage to the home of Boccaccio. The vintage was for the most part over, and the vineyards were beginning to clothe themselves in the rich livery of autumn. Charmingly mellowed tints of crimson, orange, brown, and yellow, harmonized by the exquisite cunning of nature, that first of colourists, mingled with

* Since the above was written, Certaldo has become a station on the railroad which now runs from Empoli to Siena.

the waning greens of vineyard and hedgerow, and warmed the ever pale and sober hues of the grey-green olives. The very general predominance of this last tint, due to the almost universal culture of the olive, especially in the Valdarno, is one of the most characteristic peculiarities of Tuscan landscape; and is, it must be admitted, almost invariably an offence to the eyes of the stranger in Tuscany, until he has learnt—as in a few months he is sure to do—to become reconciled to it, as contributing a needful portion to a style of scenery wholly unlike that of any other country in or out of Italy, and unquestionably possessing peculiar beauties of its own.

Certaldo is but some four or five and twenty miles from Florence; but it is neither on nor near any of the great tracks frequented by tourists, who with pack-horse constancy still keep the road, as Cooper says, and for the most are content blindly to follow their predecessors. When the traveller is at Poggibonsi, on his road from Florence to Rome, he is about eight miles from Certaldo, which lies about that distance to the north-west of him; and when he is at Empoli, on his way from

Leghorn to Florence, it is some fifteen miles to the south-east. From Poggibonsi to Empoli extends the fertile Valdelsa; one of the richest valleys in Tuscany, watered by the little stream of the Elsa, which falls into the Arno at the latter of the above-mentioned towns. Certaldo, then, is situated on the Elsa, and on the road which passes through the valley from Empoli to Poggibonsi. The easier approach to it, now that the railway from Florence to Leghorn is completed, is by Empoli; as the train carries you in an hour the eighteen Italian —equal to about twenty-one English—miles which intervene between Florence and Empoli.

I and my fellow-travellers started at six A.M.; and reaching Empoli by seven, hired a carriage there, and were at Certaldo about half-past ten. Like almost all the older walled towns of Tuscany, it is perched on the isolated summit of a cone-like hill. As is also frequently the case, especially where a modern road runs beneath the ancient town, a new bourg has gradually been formed along the course of the thoroughfare. Whatever slender elements of activity and prosperity may yet remain in the place are thus drawn off from

the ancient town to aliment its rival at the foot of the hill. The decadence of old Certaldo, as of many another once thriving community in similar situations throughout Tuscany, is therefore complete. Yet, the ancient and venerable "rocca," or fortress, as these old towns so situated are invariably called, still stands begirt with its crumbling walls; and though apparently owing nothing for many a past year to the repairing hand of mason, bricklayer, or carpenter, still bids grim defiance to father Time, and continues to afford a shelter to the descendants of Boccaccio's fellow-townsmen.

Our visit was, of course, to the "Rocca;" to the Certaldo of the fourteenth century, when the object of the dwellers in towns was to have them as much out of the way of chance comers, instead of as much in it, as possible. Accordingly, we left our "vetturino" and his carriage in the modern suburb under the hill, and proceeded to climb the steep ascent on foot. A new zigzag road has been constructed, by which a carriage may safely, if not easily, drive up to the old town; but before this was made, Certaldo must have been inaccessible to

all weak vehicles. The old paved way from the valley up to the town still remains; and, like most other of the old hill-roads of Tuscany, was evidently intended only for horses or mules, and is so steep as to have been severe climbing for them. This led, and the new road by a more gradual ascent still leads, to an ancient gateway, over whose crumbling and gateless arch the scutcheon with the Medicean balls is yet visible. This gateway opens immediately on the brow of the hill—precipice it might almost be called; and the entire walls stand similarly on the very edge of the steep descent—so that the little town occupies the whole of the table-land on the top of the hill. It contains, however, little more than one street, paved, after the invariable fashion of Tuscany, with flag-stones. In this, two or three houses still retain the tower which once marked the residence of a noble. One of these was noisily and immediately pointed out to us by a vagabond troop of ragged urchins as the house of Boccaccio. They did not wait for any inquiry on our part. They knew that strangers could visit their precipitous "Rocca" but with one object. The one single glory, boast, and source of interest

which still remains to their town in the wreck of its fortunes was evidently fully appreciated by all its inhabitants. A miserable attempt at a "cafè" is named the "Cafè di Boccaccio." We found the venerable dwelling in question shut up; and were obliged to send for the keys to the villa of the Marchesa Carlotta Lenzoni, situated at the bottom of the hill. This lady, who is generally considered to be the last remaining descendant of the Medici, and who bears the well known balls in her arms, though I fear that a severe herald would introduce a bar sinister into the bearing, has purchased the building in question for the sake of preserving it from degradation and destruction. It had, previous to the Marchesa's laudable act of patriotism, become the dwelling and magazine of a charcoal dealer.

In the meanwhile, we employed the time till the keys should arrive in strolling to the top of the one street which forms the town. There, on the highest spot of the hill, still stands the building which was once the feudal stronghold of the Counts Alberti, the independent lords of Certaldo before it was rendered subject to the republic of Florence. It then became the residence of the governor who

ruled the town and its district for the republic, —and, with the title of vicar, continued to do so under the princes of the dynasties of Medici and Lorraine, till the reign of the reformer Peter Leopold. Since that time it has been the seat of the "communità," or petty parish jurisdiction, which is now all that remains to Certaldo of its former power. For the fallen little bourg has had its high and palmy days, when the jurisdiction of its vicar extended over a wide expanse of country,—embracing many towns which, as "the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges," have grown to be far its superiors in wealth, population, and importance, — and when its subject district reached to the gates of proud Florence herself.

Of all this history, extending over some five or six hundred years of changing and falling fortunes, the dilapidated building in question forms a most curious and interesting chronicle; and we were fortunate enough to fall in with an able and willing expounder of its story on the spot. A stout, rubicund, healthy, and happy-looking old gentleman, with grey locks escaping from under a broad-brimmed hat, and one hand reposing in the

side pocket of his velveteen shooting-jacket, while the other grasped a stout walking-stick, was lounging in the sun in front of the *Palazzo communale*, as the old building still aspires to be called, and looking very much like an English farmer well to do in the world. On our approach, he arose; and saluting us in courteous guise, announced himself as the father of the "Priore," or rector of the parish. Thus saying, he seemed to assume the office of cicerone as a matter of course; and the chattering rabble of ragged boys who had hitherto formed our *cortège* fell back respectfully, and relinquished their *trouvaille* of strangers to his superior claims.

The front of the building facing the street, as well as the sides of a low-browed archway beneath which we passed into an interior quadrangle, and the walls of this inner court, were studded all over with an immense number of armorial bearings—the memorials of the long line of "vicars" who held sway here for so many centuries, each with the date, names, and titles of its owner. These were affixed to the walls, without any sort of order, chronological, symmetrical, or other,—each vicar

having placed his own wherever he happened to find a space vacant, much as schoolboys leave their names on the desks and benches of their school-room. Here was a history in itself to a Tuscan antiquary and genealogist, —and in some degree to the student of the history of Art also; for these numerous escutcheons were wrought in a variety of different materials and styles, according to their widely differing dates. There were the hard, rude carvings of the early ages of the Republic,—quaint, stiff, and simple. There were the brilliantly coloured works in earthenware of the Luca della Robbia school; with their forms as well defined, their glazing as perfect, and their hues as bright almost as on the day when they were put up. There were the less well-preserved tints and forms of fresco artists:—and there were specimens of the more durable castings of those "bronzisti," for whose works Florence was so long celebrated.

The interior of the quadrangle was not without the remains of architectural pretension. Some delicate columns, of truly artistic proportions and with elegantly ornamented capi-

tals, supported what had once been a "loggia" running round two sides of the court. The squalid degradation of the building and the nature of the objects which encumbered it, indicative of the poverty of the two or three families permitted to find a home there, contrasted painfully with these signs of having "seen a better day." Our good cicerone felt this; and with a passing sigh accompanying the admission that it was but a miserable "casaccia" now, turned with the greater gusto to the past, and wiped out the feeling of humiliation by launching out into the story of the former greatness of his "paese,"—his native town, that is; for even to this day to the feelings of a provincial Italian his country —his "patria"—is his native town or village to a degree almost incredible in the middle of the nineteenth century. He descanted with infinite relish on the former extended jurisdiction of the town; on the authority enjoyed by its vicars, who had power of life and death; on the former insignificance of the upstart towns once subjected to their sway; on the recorded fact of fifteen rebels having on one day been executed in front of that building;

and on the amount of population, wealth and civilization of Certaldo—once upon a time! The vicariate and its jurisdiction, he said, had been abolished by the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo, as a measure of general reform, and specially on occasion of a criminal having been over-hastily executed by the last vicar,—when a pardon from the supreme authority at Florence consequently arrived too late. As memorials of this departed greatness, he showed us the former prison, now a cow-shed,—and the tribunal, now an asses' stall! The latter metamorphosis was one sure not to escape the never-failing vein of sly Tuscan satire; and our friend could not help adding,—"Ma per questo è una cosa, che si vede non di rado per i tempi, che corrono."—For that matter, an ass in the judge's seat is common enough now-a-days.

The expected keys had by this time arrived; and our obliging cicerone—deeming himself, I suppose, not sufficiently learned to act in that capacity in the dwelling of Boccaccio—hurried off to seek his son, the Priore, to accompany us. The good priest soon made his appearance;—portly, though alert and active in

person,—rosy, jovial, and good-humoured in face,—frank and courteous in manner,—and though sadly rusty as to the outward man, evidently not uncultivated in mind, or even altogether so in manners. He was a good specimen of the Italian country parish priest, —very unlike the race of clergy met with in the cities, and still more different from the drones of the monastic orders. His daily occupations and thoughts would probably be found to differ very little from those of an active, laborious, not very refined parish priest in a remote, poor district in England. Thinking far more of the daily cares and troubles of his flock than of the theological speculations of doctors more or less "seraphic" or "irrefragable," or of the nice decisions of popes and councils, he would be found far more free from any shade of intolerance than many a pillar of the theoretically more tolerant Anglican church. If asked whether he held that a protestant must needs be condemned to eternal punishment, he would probably pooh-pooh your supposition that any such antiquated notions still existed. And if you persisted in proving to him from the undeniable authorities

of his church that he was bound so to hold and maintain, all you would get would be that he would think you a pestilent, cross-grained fellow, who would needs poke into dust that had much better be left to lie quiet.

Such was the good Priore who, with the greatest kindness and courtesy, led us first to the church in which the father of Florentine prose lies buried, and then to his whilom home. In the church there is a monument, consisting of an inscription and a half-length statue, erected to his memory in 1503 by one of the vicars of Certaldo. The figure is by no means bad. It represents the "novellista" with the costume which a variety of engravings has made so familiar to every eye,—a drapery round the head folding close under the chin, and adding a still greater degree of rotundity to the remarkably round face. The inscription consists of the four lines written by himself as his epitaph,—which have been so often printed that they must be familiar to all,—and an addition of some twenty complimentary verses of no especial value. The tombstone which covered his remains was removed in 1783 by the bigotry of some less tolerant pre-

decessor of the worthy Priore,—who feelingly deplored the unchristian fanaticism which would, he said, have fain turned the monument also out of the church.

From the church we went to the house of the poet. It is, although ennobled by the possession of a tower, an exceedingly small dwelling;—so small as to have with difficulty enabled its bachelor master to offer that hospitality to his dear friend Petrarch which Landor supposes him to have done in that exquisite little work of his, the Pentameron. The scene of these five delightful days of imaginary conversations is the house at Certaldo from which I date this letter; and it was the reading of them that irresistibly impelled me to the pilgrimage. Let the reader be assured that it is impossible to conceive a morsel of writing more instinct with truth of local colouring and delicate appreciation of national characteristics than Landor's Pentameron. A hundred volumes of travels and a thousand biographical and antiquarian dissertations would not place so vividly or graphically before the imagination of the reader, with their appropriate framing of local scenery, the

Tuscan peasant and the Tuscan priest as they were, and with small changes are still, and the Tuscan man of letters as he was in the Middle Ages. The gifted author has erred in representing the house in question to have been a "*villetta* hard by Certaldo,"—and in that delicious account of Ser Francesco's *ride* to his Sunday morning's mass at the Church of Certaldo. For the house is, as has been said, in the main street of the town, and within a hundred yards of the church. If, however, this more accurate acquaintance with the locality had been the means of depriving us of the "crown'd martyr's" ride, and of the saddling of the *Canonico's* nag by the joint efforts of himself and Assuntina, Boccaccio's maid and sole attendant, we should have lost infinitely more than we could have gained in accuracy of matter-of-fact therefrom.

I could not, however, make out satisfactorily where Assuntina's chamber could have been, especially when the *Canonico* or any other friend was in the house. On the ground floor, immediately on the right hand of the entrance, is a small room, now wholly unfurnished and unfloored. This may have been

Assuntina's lodging; but this room, the entrance, and a small staircase, occupy all the ground floor; and one good sized room, some five-and-twenty feet long by twelve wide, constitutes the entire first floor. Above this, with the exception of the tower and a miniature kitchen, there is nothing. In this room —the drawing-room, dining-room, library and bed-room in all probability of the poet—the Marchesa Carlotta Lenzoni has established a little *Museum Boccaccianum*, consisting of all the ancient articles of furniture of the poet's day which remained in the house—a little cabinet containing rare and early editions of all his works—some MSS. relating to his history—a specimen of his autograph—a large fresco painting of the poet by Benvenuti of Florence, occupying nearly the entire wall at one end of the apartment—fragments of his tombstone, broken and thrown aside at the time it was turned out of the church, as has been told; and, lastly, a book in which visitors are requested to record their names and impressions, if they have any. This record, unlike most others of the kind existing in all parts of Europe, contained but a small pro-

portion of English names. I recognised Sismondi's very illegible scrawl, followed by a few words sufficiently commonplace, intimating that all around him was strikingly impressed with the true stamp of the Middle Ages. Pananti, the Florentine poet, better known in England as the author of an interesting journey in Algeria, which was translated into English some fifteen years ago, had left the following record* of his visit; which I give you in an English dress, or *déshabille*, rather, as follows:—

The country folks believed—nay, do so still—
That our Certaldo's worthy Ser Giovanni
Was a famed wizard, armed with magic skill,
Now in warm quarters in a place uncanny.
But if that gentle bard a wizard be,
Story and style make up his witchery.

* The original, which I believe has never been printed, runs thus:—

Fù nel popolo ed è certa opinione
Che il buon Messer Giovanni da Certaldo
Fosse un celebre mago,—uno stregone,
Che or si trovo in paese caldo.
Se mago fù quello scrittor gentile
La magia è del racconto e dello stile.

'Twas thus that to the Muse's blest retreat,
Across his fabled bridge of witch-built glass,
This master of a style so pure and sweet
Amid the Graces was allowed to pass.
But the sweet charm of that resistless spell
Was worthier far of heaven, sure, than hell.

Our kind cicerone, the Priore, assured us that the notion alluded to was universal in the minds of the peasantry. The bridge of glass referred to is said by the village gossips to have been put in requisition by the wizard on fine moonlight nights, as a means of passing directly from the tower of his dwelling to a green knoll which he had caused the devil to throw up at some little distance from the town, where he was in the habit of taking his pastime with other witches, and such like black cattle. In proof of all which, the peasants point triumphantly to a somewhat remarkable artificial-looking hill, which certainly does exist in the valley below the town.

Delle Muse così fra il vago coro
E delle Grazie fra l'aereo ballo,
Poteva il prosator puro e sonoro
Attraversare il ponte di cristallo.
Ma del suo dir tale è il soave incanto,
Che si ha da creder ch' ei si morto santo.

"Impossible," quoth the Priore, "to drive it out of their heads! Tell them what you will, they shake their wise numskulls when you have done, and remain firm in their own persuasion. Teste dure!" added he, with a sigh, shaking his own; "why, they all think that when we priests say the *Orate fratre* in the mass, we can see all the witches who may happen to be at that moment in the church!" I did not essay to point out to the good priest the inevitable difficulties inherent in the attempt to eradicate one absurdity from the belief of his flock while labouring to inculcate others equally repugnant to reason and common sense, fearing that had I done so, I might have found him on this subject as much a "testa dura" as his flock.

From the principal chamber of the house we passed through a doorway at the end of it in a wall some four or five feet thick, and found ourselves at the bottom of the stair which climbs the square hollow brick tower. At the foot of this staircase room has been found for a little bath chamber. And some feet higher up is a good-sized cupboard in the wall; which, having been walled up time out

of mind, was some years since opened, and found to contain a considerable quantity of manuscripts of great antiquity. This occurred about seventy years ago; when an old woman, the then inhabitant of the house, made the above discovery by accident, and carried the papers to the Augustine friars of Certaldo. These monks, the tradition goes on to say, having ascertained that the MSS. were writings of Boccaccio, forthwith burnt them! The circumstances may be true or false; but this at least is certain, and curious, that in a very ancient MS. catalogue of the works of Boccaccio preserved by the care of the Mar. Lenzoni in the little cabinet which has been mentioned, several are enumerated of which no other record exists. Among these is a work on "Gallant Ladies," — a subject afterwards chosen by Brantôme, as the reader may remember. All these circumstances were related to me by the worthy Priore; who, moreover, presented me with a little work of his own, on the decadence of Italian literature, in which he has recorded them.

We mounted to the top of the tower, for the sake of looking out on the surrounding scenery,

over which the poet's eye had so often wandered from the same point. The view of the Valdelsa has no great beauty, or anything very remarkable. There is the witch-constructed knoll; but there is just such another on the other side of the town. The priest told us that the foundations of forts might be traced on both of them. The neighbouring town of St. Geminiano, with its remarkable towers, was to be seen on a hill some ten miles off. The site of Semifonte, once a thriving city, but ruined and destroyed in a war with its rival, Florence, was pointed out to us. And for the sake of my friend Domenico Grigi, of the Pentameron, I asked to be shown San Vivaldo; but it is hidden from Certaldo by an intervening eminence.

We were a numerous party now on the flat terraced roof of the little tower; for, besides the Priore and his father, some half-a-dozen girls —two of them cousins of the priest, on a visit to him, and the others friends of theirs, had taken the opportunity of seeing Boccaccio's house—and the strangers. Thus, when it came to descending the little narrow tower stair, we had to stand a moment "on the

order of our going." For only one could pass at a time; and it was necessary, or at least the good priest judged it right, as the stair was very perpendicular and winding, that the females should pass first. "Now then, girls," cried he, with a laugh, "on with you, *e così non si vedrà chi ha le gambe storte.*" "You, at least, need not hide yours, *'gnor pievano,*" retorted a tall, laughing, black-eyed belle, pointing to the goodly calves of the portly priest, well set off by his shorts and black stockings. "Nor do I," returned the priest, still laughing, and not ill pleased, as he put forward one of the stalwart supporters with the air of a dancing-master; "mine may pass muster." This is a specimen of the sort of footing a country priest here is on with his flock.

And so we quitted the small and modest dwelling, from the retirement of which Boccaccio, wearied with the vanities and troubles of life, signed himself more than once "Giovanni da Certaldo, inimico della Fortuna." Fortune's enemy! A melancholy title for one near the end of his course to assume; but adopted more, let us hope, in the humorsome

mood of Jaques than in veritable sorrow. Filippo Villani, in a passage worth translating, thus describes Boccaccio: "The poet was somewhat stout in figure, but tall withal. His face was round, with a slight depression of the nose above the nostrils; the lips rather thick, but nevertheless handsome and well lined; a dimpled chin which imparted much beauty to his smile. The expression of his face in speaking was ever jocund and cheerful —always pleasing, always benignant. He delighted much in conversation; and gained by his good qualities many friends,—not one, however, who assisted him in his poverty." Manetti, too, in his oration on the death of Leonardo Aretino, speaks of Boccaccio as "*paupertate oppressus.*" Nevertheless, it must be concluded that Ser Giovanni's poverty did not press him very hard, or he would not have refused the invitation of Petrarch to come and live with him, so delicately pressed in one of the most elegant passages of his letters. "That you should prefer," writes he, "your freedom of mind and tranquil poverty to an offer of wealth thus late in life, could I make you any such, is admirable. But that you

should despise the reiterated invitation of your friend is not so. I have no means here of offering you riches. Had I them, I should speak to you not by word or by pen, but by acts. But I have that which supplies me with what would be abundantly sufficient for two having one heart and one house. You do me wrong if you despise my offer,—worse wrong if you distrust its sincerity."

Yet Ser Giovanni preferred to brave Fortune's buffets; and to remain, as a kindred spirit has it, "pauper in ære suo," in his own little freehold mansion in Certaldo. The truth is, that our dear Ser Giovanni, genial and kindly as his nature was, was not without a dash of wayward pride, and was too fond of complete independence to live happily otherwise than under his own roof. Aretino tells us that he was "tenero di natura e sdegnoso;" which, adds he, "much injured his fortunes, inasmuch as he had nothing of his own, nor would he endure to live in dependence on signors or princes." Sansovino gives him the same character; and adds that, "judging his poverty riches enough, content with little, and much enamoured of liberty, he thus lived without any of the sorrows of dependence."

And I have no doubt that Ser Giovanni, however much "inimico della Fortuna," was far happier with a crust in his little home at Certaldo, with his Assuntina for his whole household, than many a spoilt child of Fortune; or than poor Dante, who felt so bitterly the "salt taste of another's bread, and the toilsome mounting of stairs not his own,"—and who yet lived and died in dependence on princes.

LETTER XIV.

Florence.

In a former letter written from Florence some months since, having been led to speak of Signor Vieusseux as a veteran in the ranks of Italian literature well deserving of a place in its legion of honour, I promised you some account of his "Archivio Storico Italiano"—a remarkable enterprise in many respects, and worthy of being better known north of the Alps than it in all probability is. Not the least noteworthy circumstance attending the publication is the fact that this undertaking, of an extent and importance equal to many of those for the carrying out of which societies have recently been formed in our country, has been engaged in and executed by the unaided liberality and spirit of an individual publisher. And this in a country where capital is far from abundant, and where it might be sup-

posed that the encouragement to be hoped for such a speculation would be far from equal to that which might be expected for any analogous undertaking in our richer land. And yet I think I may venture to assert, without fear of contradiction, that not one of our enterprising and sagacious London publishers would be found willing to venture on such a publication, even were the materials, together with editorial labour and supervision, placed at their disposal free of all cost. The cause of this difference I will not undertake to investigate. Is it a proof of the inferior and imperfect education of our upper and middle classes, that while novels can be published at half-a-guinea a volume, it would be a hopeless speculation to print, at any remunerating price, the many yet unpublished sources of English history? Is it rather, on the other hand, to be deemed an indication of a higher and more advanced stage of civilization, that the strong and fervid interest of the busy present, the hot haste and ceaseless activity of the daily life around us, with its thousand-hued variety of ideas, feelings, struggles, and ambitions, so engross all the stronger and more energetic spirits amongst us as to leave to few the leisure to employ their time and

thoughts in the more quiet and less-exciting "paths of hoar antiquity"? Be this as it may, the fact is certainly a remarkable one,—and, at least, may be received as proving that if, indeed, the Italians have little to be proud of but their Past, they are bent on cultivating such a knowledge of that Past as may best tend to render it of service to their Future.

It is certain that a very remarkable impetus had for the last five-and-twenty years been imparted to the study of history throughout Italy, and that men of learning and industry were busy in every part of the Peninsula in investigating and illustrating its records, till the recent political "Sconvolgimenti," as the Italians well term them, arrested in a great measure all studious and peaceful pursuits. "Storia patria"—the history of their own country—was the literature most in vogue—the reading most welcome among all classes. Chronicles were edited for the studious, and history was stewed down into historical novels for the ladies and the *beau monde*. The standard historians of the various states of the Peninsula, which exist in numbers little known north of the Alps, were reprinted with notes and illustrations. Numerous local histories, bulky volumes, readable,

and often full of interest, were written on the fortunes of towns, once independent republics, whose names are now hardly known beyond the limits of Italy. Public archives and family papers were explored, with rich results. Materials were in course of rapid accumulation, which might render possible some approach to such a history of Italy as the mother-land of all modern civilization deserves, but has never yet seen—a history of the people, as well as of their rulers—of their arts of peace, as well as of their wars—of the growth, progress, and decay of public opinion—of their social and domestic, as well as of their political, life. In no part of Europe do there exist such ample materials for all this as in Italy. That division of the country into an infinity of small independent states, which, long after it had ceased to be the political constitution of the Peninsula, still so influenced the people as to make each man deem and feel his native city to be his country, was favourable to the production and preservation of a vast mass of memorials and records of all sorts. The head of each family was more conscious of counting for something in these miniature states. Each was sure, sooner or later, to have some part in the government of his country, and felt a cor-

respondingly increased importance. Hence have arisen the existence and preservation of that immense number of "ricordi," "relazioni," &c., which still abound in the muniment rooms of almost all the old palaces of the Italian towns. A certain patriarchal style of domestic family arrangement, which the grand proportions of these noble palaces probably gave rise to, and which is far from being obsolete at the present day, also contributed to the same result; and was the means of enriching the muniment rooms with materials often more valuable to history than documents relating to public transactions. I allude to the practice of affording all the sons of the family, even when married, apartments in the family mansion. Family ties were thus strengthened, and family feelings, prejudices, partizanships, hatreds, and friendships, perpetuated and rendered important. Out of all this grew family history. The head of the house was probably its contemporaneous historian; and domestic matters, which under other circumstances would hardly have been deemed worthy of record and preservation, were registered in the family archives, and consigned from generation to generation to the safe keeping of the family muniment-room. The very circum-

stance of the existence of such a depository did much for the preservation of many valuable materials for the historian which would otherwise have perished. Large collections of letters have been thus kept together, to an extent probably unrivalled in any other country. Diaries, catalogues of property, wills, memorandums of legal processes, accounts of trials, relations of journeys, reports of embassies, contribute to form an immense mine from which the judicious historian may quarry with infinite pleasure and profit.

It is for the purpose of giving to the public the most valuable portions of this vast mass of materials, in a desirable and convenient form, corrected, annotated, and illustrated with all needful information respecting the writers, &c., that the "Archivio Storico Italiano" was undertaken. The prospectus was issued, and the first volume published, in 1842. The name of Signor Vieusseux was quite a sufficient guarantee, throughout Italy, for the spirit and intention in which the work was conceived, and the serious and *bonâ fide* manner in which it would be carried on. There was no room to fear that it was any catch-penny device; though there was considerable ground for apprehen-

sion that it might prove a *lose-penny* one, to a serious extent. The literary assistance, however, which the publisher was enabled to put forward a promise of in his prospectus, was such as to stamp the work at once with a high literary reputation. The names of Gino Capponi, Niccolini, and Inghirami, three of a committee of nine editors of the work, were sufficient to vouch for its value and historical importance in every country in Europe. The other six members of the editorial company, though not so well known beyond the Alps, are all men favourably marked in the Italian literary world. The list of correspondents and co-operators, published at the same time, included also many names of note, and some of European reputation. Among them may be noticed Orioli, then in exile at Corfu, and holding a professorial chair there, under the protection of the English Government, now the honoured professor of modern history in the *Sapienza* at Rome—Alberi, the editor of the complete works of Galileo, and discoverer of the long-lost ephemerides of the satellites of Jupiter—Sismondi, since lost to us—Azeglio, the well-known novelist, and lately still better known able and honest defender of rational and orderly

liberty against both thrones and mobs—Pompeo Litta, of Milan, the learned historian of the noble families of Italy—Libri, whose name has recently become so well known to all, &c. The prospectus, which puts forward as the especial object of the work the "revelation, as far as is possible, of the interior life of the states and people of Italy," gives the following as the commercial conditions of the undertaking. Not more than four volumes, averaging thirty octavo sheets each, shall be published in each year. The number of copies printed shall be small; "not," says the publisher, "from any ambition of creating literary rarities," but with a view of assuring to subscribers that the volumes shall not become depreciated. The materials intended to be published have been arranged, the paper goes on to say, into the following divisions:—1. Histories, chronicles, historical narratives. 2. Relations of journeys made by Italians, in different parts of the world. 3. Lives of illustrious Italians, and documents relating to the same. 4. Diplomatic papers and public acts anterior to the seventeenth century, laws, instructions to ambassadors, and their correspondence. 5. Speeches and political discourses, historical novels, chro-

nicles in verse, political poems, satires, &c. 6. Letters of a nature to illustrate history. The price is fixed at about 2½*d.* a sheet; so that a good stout volume costs about 8*s.*

To this original conception was soon added that of an Appendix, consisting of a few sheets printed uniformly with the "Archivio," and issued from time to time, containing short notices of MSS. or rare works, reviews of the more important of such new ones as touch on Italian history, and an enumeration of every publication on that subject.

Moderate as the price fixed may appear to us, the "Archivio" is thus an expensive book to Italian scholars, and the number of subscribers with which it started was lamentably small. Before long, however, the list gradually increased. The Grand Duke aided an undertaking so truly national with a very handsome subscription, and now I believe the earlier volumes of the series are out of print. Fifteen volumes of the "Archivio," and between five and six of the Appendix, have been published. The contents, as may be supposed, from the above enumeration of materials,—especially as the editors wisely abstain from all attempt at order in the

succession of volumes issued, publishing first that which can first be got ready for publication,—are as heterogeneous as can be conceived. Some of the volumes are, of course, more and some less interesting to the general reader; but in the great majority of the writings published he will find abundance of that graphic simplicity of style, and unconscious manifestation of character and self-exhibition, which more than anything else succeed in bringing before the imagination the life of a past century with its proper form and colour. You will understand exactly what I mean, and will, I think, admit the truth of it, if you will call to your recollection or make acquaintance with the vivid pictures drawn by Carlyle, in his "Past and Present," from the relation of the old monk of Edmondsbury. Yes! but the hand of a master, it may be replied, has there handled the brush. True! the lights have all been brought out, the shadows artistically arranged, and the effect heightened. But the old picture has only to be washed with a chemical reviver, to bring out the colours which the connoisseur knows to be there, and which then become visible to every eye. It may be remarked, moreover,

that this sort of value is more likely to be found in the writings of those who were not authors by profession, and who wrote without any idea that their compositions would ever meet the public eye, as is undoubtedly the case with many of those published in the "Archivio." There is, however, one remark to be made with regard to the ideas which we of the present day gather from the simple, artless narrations of the diarists and chroniclers of the middle ages. There will generally be found to pervade their narratives a sort of dry hardness, which produces on us the effect of insensibility. A marriage and a death, a presentation at court and a question by torture, are related with the same calm impassibility. But it should be remembered that the highly-coloured style of narrative which we are accustomed to, which forcibly depicts joy, horror, fear, sorrow, and the other passions, as the case may require, is the product of finished and highly advanced art. The old diarist paints none of these things, not because he feels none of them, but because his purpose is solely to record facts, and not to paint feelings.

The above remarks apply especially to a

short narration, one of the component parts of the first volume of the "Archivio," which will afford you a good specimen of the sort of materials that fill the muniment rooms of the old Italian palaces, and of the kind of entertainment to be found in the pages of this collection I shall perhaps be able to give you some faint idea how charmingly characteristic, vivid, and living a sketch of the Florentine life of the sixteenth century might be drawn from the narration in question if it were subjected to the vivifying process which has placed Jocelyn de Brakelond and his contemporaries living and breathing before us.

The writing in question is an account, by Luca della Robbia, great-nephew of the celebrated artist in porcelain of the same name, of the last moments of Pietro Paolo Boscoli, and Agostino Capponi, two young republicans who suffered death in the year 1512 for conspiring against the Medici. Many others, and Machiavelli among the number, were implicated in the affair, and suffered torture and imprisonment; but the two above-mentioned alone were condemned to decapitation. The narration is short,—occupying thirty-six pages in 8vo,—and is in its style and manner simple and *naïve* to a degree that hovers between the

pathetic and the ludicrous. Many MS. copies of it exist, however; for it seems to have passed from hand to hand among the good citizens, and to have been much read. "Pitying dames of every condition in Florence," says the present editor in his preface, "dropped their tears over the pages recording the fate of these two young republicans;" with whose sentiments and hopes we well know that a large portion of their fellow-citizens eagerly sympathized. Our narrator was, he tells us, the intimate friend of Pietro Paolo—or *Pagolo*, as he calls the name after the familiar fashion of that day; and as such passed his last night with him. He opens his story thus:—

"I remember how, on the 22nd of February, 1512, one Tuesday evening in Lent, Agostino, the son of Bernardo Capponi, and Pietro Pagolo, the son of Giachinotto Boscoli, were condemned to death as conspirators against the house of Medici, ... and I, Luke, the son of Simon, the son of Mark della Robbia, knowing that they were to die, and moved by a strong wish to console, as far as in me lay, Pietro Pagolo, who was my great friend, desirous (*etiam sic*) of knowing whether he was such as his many friends, and I above all others, had ever judged him to be,—endowed,

that is, with a high courage and no less good sense and Christian piety,—was present in the Bargello* the whole of that night, from about eight o'clock to the moment of his death, which was about four† in the morning." Then, having enumerated his excellent qualities, and described his person, the narrator continues:—"It has seemed good to me, therefore, to commit to writing all he said during that night, and to rehearse all his words, faithfully writing the truth, and neither adding nor taking away aught. And that I have done so I call to witness God, and the Confraternity of the Black Brothers,‡ and other bystanders.

* The prison of Florence, still existing nearly unaltered, and still known by the same name. It is a most gloomy and grim old pile, as black as night with age,—and a fitting theatre for the scenes which our chronicler has to relate; of the like of which very many have passed within its forbidding walls.

† From two o'clock to ten, it is in the original; the writer speaking according to the old Italian method of counting the hours from the "Ave Maria," or sun-down. Two hours after the Ave Maria, in February, I suppose, may be about eight o'clock. This mode of reckoning the hours from one to twenty-four is altogether obsolete in Tuscany, except perhaps among the clergy; but is still in very general use at Rome.

‡ The "Confraternità de' Neri" were one of the numerous religious lay companies which abounded in Florence. The special object of these Black Brothers—

And that I may write more accurately the truth, I will set down also the words of others, as of the confessor of the above-mentioned Agostino Capponi, and others. And that my narration may be complete, I will begin entirely from the beginning and continue to the end. But before I begin, let every one who may read the present record know that they may rest their faith on it, as on a true matter related without bias; inasmuch as I should have no small scruples to write lies, especially on such a subject, which, if I do not deceive myself, is no little connected with the Christian religion. Wherefore, *in nomine Jesu Christi et Beatæ Mariæ, et Sanctorum Apostolorum, et præcipue Petri et Pauli, quorum nomine ipse vocabatur* (*sic*)—let me now begin."

Such is the solemn exordium which prefaces this remarkable relation,—the accuracy of which, I doubt not, is as great as the worthy writer declares it to be. We have thus the

"i Neri," as our author calls them shortly—was to attend the last moments of those condemned to die, and comfort them with religious consolations. They were in 1408 forbidden to enter the prison for this purpose in greater numbers than twelve; in 1423, they obtained permission to double the number; and in 1432, they were authorized to increase their band to fifty.

genuine "Dernier jour d'un Condamné" of the sixteenth century. If you will take the trouble to compare it with the composition bearing that title by one of the first living writers of France, the comparison would not be found barren of amusement and suggestion.

After the above solemn preamble, the good Luca tells us that about eight o'clock Boscoli was taken from supper to the chapel, with irons on his legs. There the Black Brethren were already assembled; and the captain of the prison then announced to him that he was to die; but went through his function in a manner slovenly enough, like an utterly vulgar man, and despatched the business in two words,—so that few of the bystanders would have known what was going on, only that Pietro Pagolo cried out in this wise, "Oh, Pietro Pagolo! oh, poor Pietro Pagolo! to what a pass art thou come!" The good Luke advances towards him with a Latin text in his mouth; and continues at intervals through the night to ply the prisoner with abundance of them, all of the most consoling and hopeful tendency. Poor Boscoli is a devout Catholic, and has an orthodox belief in the power of a clever confessor to help him through the difficulties of his position,—much as a Newgate

prisoner relies on the wit of an Old Bailey lawyer to get him off at his trial. Nevertheless he is described as being of a speculative turn of mind; and *will* confuse matters by troubling himself about the state of his mind, although assured over and over again that that is of no consequence. To his friend's Latin text bidding him "not fear those who can kill the body only, &c., he answered nothing, as though he did not recognise me; but said, 'I wish to see Father Zanobi Acciaiuoli,—for I asked of the judges that if I were condemned to die, I might pass four hours with a confessor; and they promised me I should. See, therefore, that this be now granted me.' But just then one arrived, saying that Father Zanobi was not at Florence, but at Rome. Then Pietro Pagolo said, 'Let me have some friar from that convent (*i. e.* St. Mark's, at Florence),—for I have need of a learned and good man.' Then said I, 'Doubt not that you shall be consoled.' And he said, 'I have but a short time, and I am too much burthened with food, and have eaten salt victuals for supper, so that I feel as if I could not raise my spirit to God.' And suddenly he cried out, 'God have mercy upon me, for they have overloaded me with victuals. What a want of discretion! If they

had announced it to me before supper, I should have taken some light refreshment, and that would have been sufficient.' At that moment Agostino Capponi came in with the fetters on his legs; and as Pietro Pagolo seemed to him to be cast down, he said, as if to keep up his courage, 'Oh, Pietro Pagolo! Pietro Pagolo! are you not willing to die? What is the matter with you?' And Pietro Pagolo said, 'Oh, Agostino! I am willing to die; but two things grieve me. The one is, that Anton Serristori and Piero Ridolfi buoyed me up with a hope of life, and somehow I clung to it; —the other thing is, that they have given me too much to eat; and how can I turn my mind to God?'" They comfort him on this point, and urge some religious truths: to which he replies, "'I believe all this surely. But, Luca! this confessor; see that he comes,—for the time is short, and I have a heavy burthen. It is true that I have no restitution of any man's goods to make.' Said I, 'That is quite sufficient.' But he said, 'Oh, Luca! I have always been ungrateful to God, and have offended him in all kinds of ways. Yet I trust in his mercy.' 'That,' said I, 'is the principal point.' And turning to me again, he said, 'Luca, is this confessor coming?'

'Surely,' said I; 'but you must understand that I am not sure that you can have a friar from St. Mark; for you know that they are much suspected, and I doubt whether any one of them will come.'"

It is curious to observe that this young republican wished especially to have a confessor from the convent which had been Savonarola's. That reformer had been burnt to death in Florence fourteen years previously to the date of the scene which our friend Luca is describing; and it is clear that the condemned man thought that he should in that community have the best chance of finding one who could sympathize with his political creed, and view leniently the cause of his condemnation. It is interesting, too, to note that all the Brethren of St. Mark were still objects of suspicion to the government,—so much so that it might be deemed a dangerous office for one of them to shrive a prisoner guilty of high treason.

Meantime, certain confessors from a convent hard by are proposed; to which the poor fellow replies:—"I have need of one who can touch the heart; see if there be any such there." Just then the painter Stefano came in, and offered to go to St. Mark's, to see if one of the brethren would come to the

prisoner. "One came in also, who said, 'Messer Jacopo Mannegli is here, and you may have him.' And Pietro Pagolo said, with a loud and free voice, 'I'll none of Messer Jacopo.'" So the friendly painter goes off to St. Mark's; our friend Luca suggesting that one Father Serafino there was "*assai simile alla natura del Boscolo*" (of a nature sympathetic to that of Boscolo),—a rather curious recommendation for a confessor. While the messenger is absent, the condemned man, amid many *naïve* and affecting references to, and thoughts of, his mother and family, recurs continually with uneasiness to his religious state,—complaining, that though his intellect was convinced of the truths of religion, his heart remained hard and untouched. It is in vain that kind Messer Luca, who seems a bit of an amateur theologian, assures him that such fears are contrary to all the rules—that if he holds the faith and believes, that is enough—that he only troubles the matter needlessly by taking subtle distinctions in this way. Poor Pietro Pagolo will not be comforted. Good Messer Luca is nearly *au bout de son Latin;* and as a final attempt asks if he will like to read a Psalm. "And Pietro

Pagolo replied, 'I only know paternosters and ave-marias.' And I said, 'That is the best prayer a man can say. Say your paternoster to yourself.'" To further inquiries whether he held the faith, he replies, "'Read to me the creed of St. Athanasius.' And when I had found it to read to him, he said, 'It will be better that I should read it myself.' And he took the book with his fettered hands, and read the first twelve verses with such unction that it made the bystanders weep. Then he said, 'That is enough.'" He recurs again and again to the unfortunate supper. "Luke, this food prevents me from raising my spirit to God as I would wish. And it seems to me that my heart is hard; and a thousand phantasies come into my mind; and the confessor seems a thousand years a-coming." Then again, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, touching under the circumstances, and easily understood, he cries to his faithful friend, "Oh! Luke, Luke! help me to clear my head of Brutus, that I may be able to make a Christian end!"

At last the confessor arrives. It is Father Ciprian of Pont-a-Sieve, a monk of St. Mark's, and known to Luke as an excellent worthy

man. "To whom I, taking him aside, said, 'Father Ciprian, you must know that you have here to deal with a mind of a speculative turn, a learned young man, and my especial friend.' 'Does he hold the faith?' said Father Ciprian." For it seems that a report had gone abroad that the prisoner was tainted with heresy,—the result no doubt of those strange ideas which he had about the state of his heart being of consequence to his religious condition. Luke assures the monk of his friend's orthodoxy; and Father Ciprian proceeds to shrive his penitent *secundum artem*. Presently the Black Brothers begin to chant, as is their wont on these occasions, the Penitential Psalms. Upon which, poor Pietro Pagolo exclaims, with some vehemence, "Brothers! I have no need of that noise in my ears, and it annoys me grievously. My time is short. Be content to remain quiet, that I may confess in peace; for that singing of yours is of no assistance to me. If you will pray God for me quietly to yourselves, I shall be obliged to you." And Father Ciprian added, "Yes, say it each of you to yourselves. It will come to the same thing, and will not interrupt us."—In the midst of the confession, the penitent calls to Luke, and says, "'When I was a lad, Luke,

I vowed to go to Santa Maria Impruneta* on foot; and I have never fulfilled my vow. I beg of you by our friendship to undertake this obligation for me.'—And I said, 'By our friendship I promise you to perform your vow.'—The shrift ended, the good friar continues with the two friends, and employs the time in religious consolation and exhortation, till the last moment. I might cite a variety of passages from the discourse of that night, all scrupulously set down by the worthy Luke, —some touching, from their simple feeling; some strangely quaint; some curious, as illustrating the extraordinarily material nature of the devotional practices of that day, even on the verge of the last great step. But I have already been led on to occupy too large a portion of my letter with the above sketch of this highly-interesting little chronicle. The last scene of all, equally minutely described, takes place in the yard of the Bargello, at four A.M. I will not meddle with this; but I must give you the result

* A shrine about eight miles from Florence, still in high repute. It possesses a "Black Virgin," which is had out on great occasions of public disaster—as, *e. g.*, at the time of the flood here, some four years ago,—and is thought to do many miracles.

of a conversation between our good Luke and Father Ciprian, which took place about three months after the above night, and with which our chronicler closes his narrative:—"I asked him then," says Luke, "what opinion he held concerning his (Pietro Pagolo's) soul? He answered, 'I firmly believe that his soul is in Paradise, and has not passed through Purgatory. And to tell you my own opinion—but (said he) these are not things to repeat; for then men say, These friars always make out that things go according to their own prejudices; however, I will say it to you, but keep it to yourself—I believe that he, without any doubt, died a martyr. For I found in him an excellent and most upright intention; so much so, that I was astonished at it. Be very sure, Luke, that there are few like him. He was a young man of infinite courage, and with the best intentions. And as to what you said to me that night, about St. Thomas having spoken against conspiracies, know that St. Thomas makes this distinction—either nations have themselves placed the yoke of a tyrant on their necks; or by force, on a sudden, in despite of the people, a tyrant reigns. In the first case, conspiracy is not lawful; in the second, it is a good work.'"

It must be admitted that the young Florentine Brutus addressed himself to the right shop, when he applied to Savonarola's Convent for a confessor.

Will you also admit that this account of Lucca della Robbia's "Dernier Jour d'un Condamné,"—which I have selected as giving a specimen of the contents of Vieusseux's "Archivio" compressible into a more possible space than the majority of the pieces there printed—is of sufficient interest to pay you for the trouble of reading it?

LETTER XV.

Florence, March 1848.

A DYNASTY has of late fallen here,—gone out like a fallen star, as noiselessly almost,—leaving a vacant spot in the political hemisphere nearly as little noticed as that occasioned by the extinction of one private among the starry host! But it is not to communicate or to speculate on the probable issue of this, that I have taken up my pen to write to you.

Of all the consequences of the progress of mankind in modern ages, the most important perhaps is the certainty that civilization in its highest sense is no longer dependent on the fortunes, the caprices, the tastes, or the will of the potentates of the earth, but is at once the product and the inalienable property of the people,—that it no longer has to descend on mankind in beneficent showers from above, but wells up from a myriad living springs

scattered over the whole wide extent of society. So, I am going to tell you nothing of our moves in the world of politics, but of the new statues recently erected under the porticoes of the building called the "Uffizii."

Giorgio Vasari, whose reputation northward of the Alps rests more on his historical than on his architectural and political labours, built the edifice in question, for Cosmo the First, between 1560 and 1574. As the name by which it is still ordinarily known imports, it was intended for the "offices" of the various magistracies of Florence. The tribunals, the Mint, the Magliabecchian library, &c., still occupy the lower parts of the immense building. But that which has rendered the "Uffizii" almost as well known throughout Europe as in Florence, is the magnificent and well-nigh unrivalled collection of works of art of every kind which is contained in the upper story of the building. This upper story, when Vasari built the "Uffizii," was an open "loggia," or roofed and colonnaded terrace, after the fashion of which so many examples still remain on the summits of the older Florentine palaces. The intercolumniations were afterwards filled with huge windows,—and the space entirely inclosed at a later period

when it was determined by the magnificent collectors of the Medicean dynasty to locate there the artistic wealth with which they were endowing their country—κτημα ες αει.

The building is not altogether unworthy of its contents, and of its reputation; although the distribution of its parts is such as to prevent any good view being obtained of the principal façade. This forms three sides of a parallelogram, so narrow in proportion to its length as to merit the appellation of a line; only prevented from being a *cul-de-sac* by an open archway for foot passengers which makes the "Uffizii" a thoroughfare, leading from the Piazza del Granduca to the quay along the Arno,—the archway in question being at the end nearest the river. Vasari, in the account which he has left of his own works, writes thus:—

"It is not long since,—about the same period, (1560-1574,) I completed, from a beginning which I had previously made, the 'Loggia' and immense fabric of the Offices for the Magistrates, which turns towards the Arno. It is the most difficult and boldest piece of architecture I have ever undertaken, from being founded on the edge of the river,

and as it were raised up in the air.* But this was necessary as well for other causes as to annex to the building, as has been done, the vast corridor which, crossing the river,† leads from the Ducal palace to the Pitti palace and garden. This corridor was, by my design and under my superintendence, completed in five months, although it is a work which might well be thought to have occupied five years."

All round the façade, inclosing on three sides the parallelogram which has been described, the architect constructed a series of niches, some twenty in number, destined to receive the statues of Tuscany's greatest men. The appropriation of these required doubtless some consideration. Things of even the smallest moment are never done in a hurry here; and Tuscany has paused on her decision in this matter nearly three hundred years. At least, it is only a few years since the work

* The foundations had to be raised very considerably above the bank of the Arno, as the building would otherwise have stood on a rapid slope.

† Over the tops of the little jewellers' shops which line the sides of the Ponte Vecchio, in the manner formerly to have been seen on old London Bridge.

of filling up these niches was taken in hand in earnest. The task has since then been actively proceeded with, and only two or three vacancies now remain to be filled. Of the eighteen statues which have been thus erected, some are good and some bad as works of art; but it will be seen from the enumeration of them which I am about to give you, that an enlightened spirit of "hero-worship" has presided over the selection of names to be thus honoured; that the number of the teachers and civilizers of mankind bears the proportion which it ought to do to that of their destroyers; and that here, at least, a people is learning to accord the name of *hero* and the meed of heroism to those who use other instruments of achieving glory than the sword.

The merit of these statues ranges from very good indeed to very bad indeed; and the prices understood to have been paid to the artists varied from 600 to 1,000 crowns (from about 130*l.* to 215*l.*) It may be mentioned as an excuse for the less successful artists—if indeed it should be so considered—as well as throwing a degree of blame on the authorities who had the giving of the orders, that in nearly every instance the merit and the price

have risen together. It is remarkable, also, that the best statues are decidedly those of the brothers of the chisel; so that it might seem as if their disciples of the nineteenth century had shown partiality to the great masters of their art.

The statue of *Niccolò Pisano*, by Fedi, is one of the best, perhaps the best, of the series. The great Pisan, whose principal works must still be sought in his native city, is represented in the act of contemplating with surprise and enlightened admiration, charmingly expressed in face and attitude, the sculptures on an antique sarcophagus. It is recorded, that the study of such a remnant of classic art caused Niccolò to modify considerably and improve his early style. The costume of the great sculptor's day has been carefully studied by Fedi in the frescoes of the Campo Santo at Pisa, and accurately reproduced in this very interesting work.

The Florentine sculptor *Donatello* has been admirably represented by Torrini. He has shown the master with chisel in hand, in act to strike,—and the whole figure is full of life and motion. The light drapery which falls from the shoulders is most skilfully managed, so as to hang both naturally and simply with-

out appearing at all to interfere with the action and motion of the figure.

Giotto, by Duprè, is also a charming statue. This young artist, as the reader may remember, rose a year or two ago into sudden reputation from his prostrate statue of Abel—a work undoubtedly worthy of ranking in the first class of modern sculpture. A great deal of professional jealousy was excited at the time by the admiration lavished on the then unknown artist; and a vast quantity of nonsense talked by rivals with more illiberality than science, who wished to detract from the merit of the work by maintaining that the various parts of the figure were cast from a dead body. A Cain which followed, was decidedly far from equal to the Abel, though not without merit. The statue of Giotto, though not affording scope for so high an order of excellence as those just mentioned, is an admirable work. The figure has been criticised as rather heavy. But perhaps the herdsman-artist whose first boyish studies were rude outlines of the figures of the animals which it was his business to watch, scrawled with chalk as he lay on the hill side, —the untaught result of irrepressible inborn impulse,—perhaps such an one is fitly con-

ceived and represented with the stalwart sturdiness of a peasant's form. The dress is that of the day, with a hood covering the head, which is bent in an attitude of quiet thoughtfulness. A buckled strap is round the loins, in which the thumb of one hand is thrust. The pose is not a graceful one; but it is admirably full of character, and highly original.

The architect and sculptor *Andrea Orgagna* is also an excellent statue. He is represented, compasses in hand, in a meditative attitude.

Benvenuto Cellini, by Cambi, is in bad taste, — fantastic, affected, wholly without dignity. Possibly, the artist might defend his work by asserting, not without truth, that so his statue best expresses the character of him whom it represents.

Guido Aretino, the musician, by Nencini, is very ordinary, heavy, and meaningless.

Of *Leonardo da Vinci*, by Pampaloni, the same may be said.

Pier Capponi—who is represented in the act of tearing the celebrated proposition of surrender made by Charles the Seventh, outside the gates of Florence, to which the patriot citizen replied that the besieger's trumpets

should be responded to by the city's bells—is a poor work, mean and unmeaning.

Michael Angelo is better, though by no means equal to those mentioned above.

Dante, by Demi, is bad, poor and weak. The great Florentine has been unfortunate in his marble immortality. The sitting statue in the cenotaph in Santa Croce is execrable—worse than this by Demi.

Petrarch, by Leoni, is also bad; little more than a bundle of ill-wrought drapery.

Boccaccio is but little better,—lumpy and meaningless.

Farinata degli Uberti, the *one* Italian who preferred his country to his party—and *Ferruccio*, the stern republican—are both stiff figures in armour, with little of either character or dignity. The latter figure is not improved by a huge *bonnet rouge* with which the republicans of modern Florence have seen fit to decorate it.

Macchiavelli is bad, and looks only half finished. He is represented in his long secretary's gown, with his Jesuit-looking face reposing in pensive guise upon his hand. The conception is not altogether bad, but the execution is very imperfect.

Amerigo Vespucci, by Grazzini, and *Guic-*

ciardini, by Cartei, stand next one another; and are of mutual assistance, inasmuch as each makes it difficult to say of the other that it is the worst in the whole collection.

I will conclude my letter by giving you a curious passage anent these same "Uffizii," which I met with the other day in the rarely read and well-nigh forgotten historian, Filippo Pigafetta.

"Here," says he, "is the Distillery, as it is called, in chambers where the most skilled masters of the art are continually distilling waters of virtue from scented flowers and herbs, and drawing oils from drugs and spices, extracting from them their quintescence and composing unguents and restorative confections, and liquors against malignant fevers, and against pestilence and poisons. Here they make medicaments and powders of excellent power, and '*tostane*' (?), for the Grand Duke to carry with him for himself and for his court when he travels or goes hunting. He gives them also to prelates, ambassadors, and nobles; and most charitably to all when prompt remedies are required. So that in truth, as well as in name, he shows himself a '*Medico*' generous to those in need, and kind, as seen from many an evident cure of the infirm, who find immediate benefit from his treatment."

Most of the Medici dabbled in this kind of trash, and some of them expended immense sums in the fabrication of certain compounds for which the distillery of the "Uffizii" was especially famous. Their oil against poisons was celebrated all over Europe. A box of these medicaments always formed part of the presents made to foreign courts and distinguished visitors. Among their most valued and most jealously guarded secrets were the "*Unto da fuoco del Siciliano*"—the "*Oro potabile del Pugliesi*"—the "*Polvere sonnifere di Gio. Nardi*"—the "*Acqua per levar le margine del vojuolo del Duca di Mantova*," &c. But I fear you will have already exclaimed, "Ohe! jam satis!"—and will, therefore, conclude by requesting you to pass in thought from the gloomy chambers where all this trumpery was so seriously concocted some two centuries since, to the sunlight of the neighbouring piazza, where the Florentines of 1849 have set up their tree of liberty with its red cap on the summit. We have travelled a long way in those three or four steps:—may we hope that the tree of liberty may prove a somewhat more valuable remedy for the ills which it is expected to cure than the fondly trusted potions of the old "Fonderia."

LETTER XVI.

Arles, March, 1849.

Of all the mysteries which have been written, whether of Paris, of London, of Brussels, or of elsewhere—all more than sufficiently fictitious—I, writing now from Provence, pronounce the Mysteries of Udolpho to be the most mendacious. Oh, Mrs. Radcliffe! Mrs. Radcliffe! how could you, with an audacious air of truthfulness, to be paralleled only by Defoe's account of Mrs. Veale's Ghost—how could you write, sitting the while snugly by side an English sea-coal fire, all those too seducing descriptions of the vineyards, the olive-groves, the limpid streams, and the verdant valleys of sweet Provence? To all those who may be now devouring as eagerly, and believing as fondly, the Radcliffian version of the South of France, as I did some quarter of a century ago, I conscientiously declare, that,

as far as my rather extended knowledge of Europe goes, there does not exist within its limits so arid, so monotonous, so ugly, and so every way unattractive a region as Provence.

I entered it from Italy by Nice; passing by the ugly, tasteless, treeless, dust-enveloped little road-side suburban villa, with its vulgar-looking gilt-headed iron rails in front, for which Lord Brougham deserts the lovely banks of the Lowther and the magnificent groves and truly noble halls of Brougham. The bay of Cannes is certainly pretty—and its gleaming waves and wooded banks form the distant view from the house; but the immediate foreground and neighbouring land have about as much charm as the *garden*, which intervenes between the New road and one of the houses in that not highly picturesque locality.

Beyond the little town of Cannes, the road crosses a range of partially wooded hills, called "Les Maures," from having been infested by Saracen brigands in the good old times of poetry and romance, broken heads and cut throats. The porphyry rocks of which they are composed take fantastic and rather picturesque shapes; which, added to the mingled foliage of the cork and stone pine, together with here and there a distant peep of the sun-

lit Mediterranean, form a landscape of some beauty. But when the traveller has rattled down their western slope, and passed through the dirty little town of Frejus, he has nothing before him but dull parched plains and barren stony hills.

In the midst of a region of low calcareous undulations, producing corn, wine, oil, and dust in astonishing quantities, stands Aix, the ancient capital of Provence, the city of good Roi René—the home by predilection of the Troubadours—the especial head quarters of poetry, love, gallantry and festivity. I remained two days in Aix for king René's sake. It seemed hard to believe that all that gay and gallant time, with its parliaments of love, its jousts and tournaments, its knights and ladies, its jongleurs and troubadours, should have passed and left no trace, no visible impress, or some memorial, if not strictly visible, at least appreciable to the eye of historic faith. But no! Nothing! A more utterly uninteresting provincial town it is impossible to conceive. In vain I poked among its obscure lanes and filthy courts. I found nothing to reward my enthusiasm. One or two façades of the ambitious architecture of the Louis XIV. period marked *ci-devant* noble

palaces, where, in the days of the Provençal Parliament, Mirabeau may have been attracted to the dull and pompous festivities of its members, when engaged in the pursuit of her who, so unfortunately for both parties, became his wife. But of a gayer and earlier period, nothing—not a ruined arch nor a wall! The few remaining ruins of the palace of the Counts of Provence were removed some years ago to make place for a bran new and tasteless Hôtel de Ville.

One thing, however, I *did* find, which may be as new to you as it was to me. All over the walls I had seen posted, amid notices of "banquets democratiques," and advertised sales of oil, huge placards headed with the words "Grande Crèche Provençale." I fancied that it must mean a lying-in hospital, or, possibly, one for foundlings; but on further inspection, discovered that I was reading the programme of a sort of theatrical spectacle. There was promise of new decorations, additional scenes, and contrivances of mechanism. In a word, here was the sole medieval survivor of so much that is else utterly dead and vanished, in the shape of one of the old mysteries or scriptural stage-plays. Under the name of "Crèche"—which stands thus as a part put

for the whole—is still known, it seems, in Provence, the scenic representation of the miraculous conception and birth of our Saviour. But, as a concession to the more worldly spirit and more awakened curiosity of modern times, it appears to have been necessary to mingle in the bill of fare various profane elements, with apparently the least possible attention to homogeneity of character or even to propriety. Thus, following the adoration of the Magi, we have a scene between a peasant and a horse-dealer. Between the latter and a gipsy scene, the flight into Egypt is introduced, &c. Thus the proprietors of the "Grande Crèche Provençale" strive to mingle the *utile* with the *dulce*, and to cater at the same time for the amusement and for the edification of the faithful.

These there is reason to think are found chiefly among the softer sex, here as elsewhere. One of my two days at Aix was a Sunday. I visited the various churches, and in most of them found in the afternoon large and close-packed congregations composed entirely of women, listening to discourses delivered with a wonderful amount of gesticulation and vocal energy in the *patois* of Provence. This dialect, as utterly unintelligible to a

Parisian as it would be to a Londoner, consists of very mixed ingredients. It contains many words of evident Greek origin, received at a very early period from the Phocæan colony at Marseilles. Many Latin words also, in purer and less altered form than they exist in French, are in use in the Provençal dialect. For instance, *Ubri*—drunk; *Lagremos*—tears; *Fusto*—a stick; *Areno*—sand; *Car*—flesh; *Cebo*—an onion; *Neblo*—a cloud, &c. A few words of Gothic and some of Saxon origin are mingled in the heterogeneous compound. Lastly, a large portion of the language has continued unchanged from that spoken by the original Celtic inhabitants of the soil. This motley speech is poured forth with an impetuosity and rapidity peculiar to this part of France, whose natives themselves admit that they speak so fast as to mutilate their words by knocking them one against the other.

From Aix, a drive of two hours carried us to the railway now at work between Marseilles and Avignon. We joined it at a station called Rognac—on the margin of one of those wide salt-water lakes which diversify the broad extent of the delta of the Rhone, and serve as a sort of quit-rent paid to old Ocean,—marking

his former occupation of the entire region, and asserting his right to re-enter into possession of it at some future epoch of earth's history. From Rognac to Arles the rail lies chiefly along the edge of that vast stony plain called the Crau. It is impossible to conceive a *coup-d'œil* so suggestive of utter irremediable desolation as is presented by the flat, stone-covered surface of this barren plain, extending without the slightest variation or interruption to the horizon! It is in traversing such a region as this that one blesses the space-abridging powers of steam!

Arles, as all the world knows, is famous for its Roman antiquities and for its pretty women; and in both categories it deserves its reputation. The care expended by the city on the preservation of its monuments—the memorials of its palmy state, when it was the Rome of Gaul, as Ausonius calls it—is highly creditable. Its exquisitely proportioned little amphitheatre, a veritable miniature Coliseum, is still under the hands of the masons. Indeed, the only fear seems to be lest the authorities should fall into the fault so common to the French in such matters, and push the indispensable work of preservation too far towards an attempt at restoration. It has

been at length thoroughly isolated from the mean surrounding buildings, which well nigh suffocated it; the interior has been well cleared out; and a light iron railing, as a defence from wanton injury, has been erected around it. Evidently, the good city has not spared cost in the matter.

A very few days' *séjour* in Arles is sufficient to confer familiarity with the peculiar cast of features which has obtained for its women the fame of beauty. The type is unmistakably a peculiar one, — remarkable both for the singular uniformity with which it prevails in the city, and for its dissimilarity to the usual cast of features in the neighbouring towns. All the women appear to be more or less alike. The uniformity of the costume adds to this effect. Each pretty face, with its fair and tolerably high though rather too narrow forehead, its finely-arched and well-marked brow, its soft black eye, laughing full-lipped mouth, and rounded dimpled chin, as seen beneath the little muslin cap, bound round the head with a broad ornamented ribbon, costing some six francs a yard,—or if the wearer be too poor to afford this, with a gay coloured cotton handkerchief—each of these appears but a slightly modified copy of the last. Add to

the graces above enumerated the charm, so rare in France, of a clear and brilliant complexion, almost universal among the young Arlesiennes, and you have a tolerably correct inventory of the beauties which claimed for Arles in the days of her Pagan splendour the especial protection and patronage of Venus.

A railway in its onward course is, as we have often seen, as little a respecter of places as Death is of persons. The iron-shod intruder has accordingly been found in many strange positions and incongruous companionships:—but never did he thrust his disturbing presence anywhere with more audacious disregard for propriety, and for the venerable sanctities of time-honoured antiquity, than when he bored his way through the centre of the ancient cemetery of Arles, known as Les Aliscamps. This name is a corruption of *Elysii Campi;* and the vast Necropolis, which it designates, is—or rather was—one of the most interesting specimens extant of an undisturbed burial field of the Romans and of the early Christians. Both Pagans and primitive Christians had buried here over a very large space of ground; and the latter had hallowed the spot by the erection of several larger and smaller oratories and chapels. One good-sized church, Sainte

Marie-des-Graces, still remains, an exceedingly picturesque ruin. A very pretty fragment of a smaller building, known as St. Crucifix, is yet standing at no great distance from the former. Around these two have been gathered all the very considerable number of sarcophagi and stone tombs which the works for the railway routed out from their resting-places. This disturbance and ousting of the ancient tenants has been the more extensive from the circumstance that, not only has the railway passed through the cemetery, but the unfortunate spot has been selected for the purpose of erecting large workshops, engine-houses, and all those extraordinarily-shaped and especially hideous edifices that railroads always erect at their places of predilection.

The result of this wholesale disturbance of a spot held sacred during so many centuries has produced one of the strangest scenes imaginable. The entire distance between the two ruined buildings above mentioned has assumed the appearance of a complete street of tombs. The sarcophagi are ranged on either side as thickly as they can stand; many retain their huge ark-shaped stone covers, but more perhaps are without them. Here and there a bone or two still remain at the bottom

of their rifled resting-place. The majority are quite empty. Around the larger ruin of Notre Dame des Graces the whole ground is strewn with a vast quantity of them, mostly covered, and grouped in every possible variety of confusion. Locked within a part of the ruined church still capable of affording some shelter and protection, there are to be seen three or four metal coffins, whose tenants have for some chance reason been treated with more respect. Of these one contains the tolerably perfect skeleton of a Pagan maiden whose brief history was found inscribed on her grave-stone. She died at the age of seventeen, on the day of her marriage! The cause of her death is not stated. Her immediate neighbours now, as they lie side by side on the pavement of the ruined chancel, are two of the ancient Archbishops of Arles! She has one on each side of her. Their skeletons also are nearly perfect. Misfortune—which in life, as the proverb teaches us, has the effect of bringing us into strange companionship—sometimes produces, it should seem, similar effects even after death. Poor Pagan maiden!—one of the comely girls of Arelas, whose "madonna" was Venus! She would hardly have found her way into such reverend

company without the assistance of the great leveller; nor even by his alone, without the additional aid of that other modern leveller, the Railway, with his pickaxe and shovel!

During the first two days of my stay here the climate appeared delicious—the heat in the middle of the day almost too great. For the last two days the mistral, of evil celebrity, has been blowing. It is difficult to give an adequate idea of the change, or of the detestableness of the climate under the influence of this scourge. The same sun is shining in the same bright blue sky, but the temperature is glacial. The sun is there only to glare and dazzle, and seems to have no more power for warmth than a farthing candle against the boisterous blast which chills the very marrow in one's bones. The whole air is so full of dust that it is impossible to stir out without getting the mouth and nostrils filled with it. The inhabitants hurry through the bleak streets, cowering as best they may under their hooded cloaks. All nature seems shrivelled and dried up under the evil influence. The Rhone is blown into white-crested little waves. And all this may very likely continue for the next week—or month perhaps!

I shall strike tents, and be off beyond the

range of this truly ill wind, which I am sure *can* blow nobody good. This it is not difficult to do, for the district of the mistral is pretty nearly confined to the valley of the Rhone. It is dreadfully felt at Marseilles—less at Aix. It touches Montpellier, but gently: beyond that, towards Narbonne or Toulouse, it is unknown. Arles is its very head-quarters; and the position of the city on the Rhone, and between the vast plains of the Crau and the Camargue, affords full scope to the merciless fury of the enemy.

LETTER XVII.

Béziers, March 18.

To while away a long evening at Nuremberg, once upon a time, I poked out of a little circulating library at the foot of the Metzgerbrüke a French novel entitled "Le Vicomte de Béziers." It was a novelised version, by no means ill done, of the story of that Vicomte de Béziers who partook of the persecutions inflicted by Mother Church on the unfortunate Albigenses, because he would not aid her in exterminating his subjects, or submit to that penance at her hands which she imposed on his less spirited kinsman, Raymond of Toulouse;—who obtained forgiveness for a similar offence at the price of receiving in the porch of St. Giles's Church a scourging on his naked back, in the presence of the Papal Legate and a dozen bishops. The long and brave resistance to the tyranny of the Church made by

the Vicomte and his good town of Béziers, and the ultimate destruction of both by the overwhelming powers at the command of Rome, were so vividly told, as to beget in me a strong desire to see the brave little town perched on its strong hill, and to look at those gloomy old streets which ran with blood when the Holy Abbot of Citeaux cried to the soldiers of the besieging army—"Kill all! kill all! the Lord will know his own!"

Years not a few have passed since this fancy of mine was born, and I have "wandered many a weary foot," as the old Scotch song says, since then:—and here I am at Béziers at last! So, now for my "impressions."—But, first of all, I must empty the small budget of *merkwürdigkeiten* picked up since the date of my last letter.

I came from Arles to Montpellier as fast as the railroad would carry me,—which was not above eighteen miles an hour; for though my antiquarian conscience pricked me much for passing Nimes without stopping to look at its boasted amphitheatre and "*maison carrée*," the detestable mistral was howling to such a tune as we passed over the long bridge which unites Tarascon on the left bank of the Rhone to Beaucaire on the right, that I would not

have remained within its range to look at Paradise. It was really rather a nervous affair,—that same passage over the Rhone across the long bridge, which swung on its cables in the blast like a slack rope under a rope-dancer: the more so as the blowing a heavy carriage clear into the river is no unheard-of feat of King Mistral when in high spirits. Already every bone in my body was aching with his evil influence:—so I left the antiquities to a more favourable opportunity, and sped past Nimes.

Montpellier is reckoned a stronghold of Catholicism and legitimacy. There stands, it is true, the tree of liberty, emblem of the republic, erected on the "place." But the religious spirit of the town, unable as yet to go to the length of removing the hated symbol, has expressed itself by rearing a huge cross on the top of it;—following in this the well-known fashion of the Church of Rome, which is ever ready to appropriate to itself by a process of amalgamation and assimilation elements the most heterogeneous and even hostile to its own nature. It reminded me of the old Druidical stones in Brittany,—to which the peasants persist in paying reverence wholly pagan in its origin and character, while the

Romish priesthood cleverly contrive to filch away the worship by adroitly raising a cross on the top of each idol of the old religion.

The most interesting thing that Montpellier has to show is its collection of pictures, bequeathed to the town by the very indifferent artist, but munificent citizen, Fabre, the friend of Alfieri and of the Countess of Albany. There are a considerable number, of an excellence rarely found in a provincial capital; and among them is Sir Joshua's well-known and exquisite picture of the young Samuel, recently purchased by the town.

It will be remembered that Young's adopted daughter, Mrs. Temple, the "Narcissa" of the "Night Thoughts," died here; and those who have seen half a century may perhaps call to mind the passage in that well-nigh forgotten poem which speaks of her burial here by stealth—"With pious sacrilege a grave I stole," &c. It has been asserted that this is all "*bosh*," as Narcissa was in reality buried at Lyon; and I have referred to the matter merely for the sake of mentioning that I was assured by competent authority in the town that the poet's account is in fact strictly true,—that Narcissa was secretly buried here—but not so secretly as to escape the vigilance

of fanaticism. The furious bigotry of the populace made it necessary to remove the body from the grave, and transport it elsewhere. It found at last a resting-place at Lyon. It would seem that Montpellier has not yet changed its character in this respect, amid so much that is changed in it and around it; for I was assured that the mutual hatred of the Catholics and Protestants is even now as bitter as in the good old times of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes,—that the two sects will hardly meet in the same room, or, if they do, scrupulously range themselves on opposite sides of it! What a charming society! Should a Jew be present, I suppose he is made to stand equidistant from both parties, in the middle of the room! And yet, in the evening at the theatre I saw these exceedingly religious people witnessing with much complacency a truly indecent parody of the Mosaic history of the Fall; in which Adam, Eve, and the Serpent sing vaudeville airs,—and the former, despite the flaming sword of the angel driving him from Paradise, springs repeatedly at the tree of knowledge, and plucks several apples, which he carries off with him triumphantly as he leaves the garden.

A railway carried us in an hour from this

head-quarters of bigotry to the flourishing little sea-port of Cette, situated at the extremity of the long strip of land which separates the Etang de Thau from the open sea. Cette has risen, and will rise, in importance together with the colony of Algeria:—for it is the best port of departure for "L'Afrique Française" from the mother country. It is, in short, a charming place to *depart* from—and this in truth is the only charm it has to boast. Never in any part of the world did I look upon a country so hideous, so desolate, so repulsive as the brown expanse which the wearied eye wanders over from the stony hill behind the town. And yet, immediately beneath it, and full in sight, lies the town of Frontignan, whose vineyards produce the rich and valuable wine so called. Many an imagination may have wandered away as the luscious nectar trickled over the palate to scenes of southern beauty such as fancy might assign to the land which produced such a vintage,—but never assuredly did any picture to itself the spot aright. A confused jumble of pale grey stones identical in colour with the general tone of the landscape around, and only somewhat more regular in its forms than the abundant fragments of rock which cumber

the soil on all sides, is the town of Frontignan. The vineyards, stretching far and wide over the flat plain, elevated a foot or two at most above the level of the salt marshes which border the coast, are of a somewhat warmer brown, and are studded with regular rows of little brown plants not higher or larger than cabbages. These be the vines. At the date of this letter they had not begun to sprout, and were therefore as wholly brown as everything else around. Tree or grass the eye sought for in vain.

The interior of Cette is at least one-half water. What with the open sea on one side, the Etang de Thau on the other, the docks in the middle, and the canals uniting all three, the shipping and the houses have at least equal shares of the space. And with all this the inhabitants of this terraqueous town are in the position of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner: —"Water, water, everywhere, and not a drop to drink!" They are totally destitute of fresh water. All they use is brought from a distance—is bought by the pail-full—and when bought, is so bad as to be almost undrinkable. In summer they are obliged to place it for a day or two in cool cellars to render it at all fit for use.

Of such a town of course the quay offered most promise of amusement. There, all was bustle and signs of thriving, or at least active, commerce. Quantities of grain and timber, and picturesque cargoes of oranges lying in huge heaps under awnings on the decks of southern-looking felucca-rigged vessels were arriving,—and endless rows of casks were being shipped for departure. Suspicious and ill-looking articles these, when it is known that Cette carries on an extensive manufacturing and exporting trade of false wines of all kinds and qualities:—chiefly for the English market, of course! Poor John Bull smacks his lips over some detestable broust concocted of poor wines, worse brandy, sugar, alum, and no one knows what besides, which his wine-merchant has with a safe conscience protested to be "neat as imported."

As I was indulging myself, on the "suave mari magno," &c. principle, with gazing on all this busy scene, the only idler there, the Languedoc, a large steamer of some 300 horse-power, came puffing into the harbour, arrived from Algiers. I hastened to the quay alongside of her, with a vague idea of seeing some chief from the Atlas, or other strange importation in a burnous, descending her side; but

the only portion of the cargo more interesting than a corpulent old major of infantry, who celebrated his return to his native land with a shower of imprecations at the porters, tide-waiters, commissioners, &c., who fixed on him like a swarm of bees on a sugar barrel, was a couple of beautiful little Arab ponies,—exquisite little creatures, who stept as docilely and gingerly down the inclined plane from the ship's deck to the lighter as a fine lady could have done.

The next morning we crossed the Etang de Thau in a small steamer, with the African sounding title "El Kebir,"—transhipped ourselves at the further end of the Etang into the boat plying on the celebrated "Canal du Midi,"—and were by its aid brought to Agde, a little seaport on the mouth of the Hérault. Here we found the Agdeans busily employed in pulling down and selling in lots the huge town walls which the Phocians of Marseilles built up some eighteen hundred years ago or there away. The vast blocks of black basalt, a world too wide for the modern purposes of these diminutive days, were being scraped and hacked and sawed by the masons with almost as much labour as might have served to dig them from the quarry. A range of new well-

built houses were in progress of being built on the site and out of the materials of the old walls; and it may be concluded, therefore, that Agde is in this its extreme old age as thriving and flourishing a spot as when the Phocian colony first made a port here, and named it "Αγαθη."

From Agde, Paul Riquet's much vaunted "Canal du Midi" brought us to Béziers. Murray in his Guide-Book speaks disparagingly of this mode of conveyance,—intimating that it is "only resorted to by the lower orders." It may be so: but in that case it appears to me that the "lower orders" have a better notion of what is agreeable than their superiors who travel by the diligence. There is an airy and comfortably fitted up little cabin, in which, or on the roof of which, one may sit at pleasure, and be drawn along without jolt or dust by four horses at the rate of six or seven miles an hour. It is true that those who are in a hurry will be apt to lose their patience at the innumerable windings which make them point their course to every quarter of the compass in turn. But I was in no hurry. Then again this manner of transit bears the stamp of its ungentility in its exceeding cheapness:—my gentility, how-

ever, condescended to pocket that affront. We shared the cabin with the director of the telegraph at Narbonne and his young wife, with whom we soon made acquaintance, and thus, despite the "lowness" of the thing, enjoyed our little voyage to Béziers much.

Here, too, the inhabitants are busily active in effacing every vestige of the olden time. In honest truth, I cannot say that they are at all in the wrong for doing so. Rows of handsome new houses of white cut stone are springing up on the site of the huge old walls,—which it takes well nigh as much labour to demolish as it does to build the fabrics that replace them. Airy *boulevards*, with statues and theatres and "all the delicacies" of this nineteenth century season, are taking the place of citadel and fortress; and the blood-stained old town is doing its best to forget its former doings and striving to look cheerful and smiling. A stern, touch-me-not looking old place it must have been in its day of strength, —when the heretics were starving within its walls, while Mother Church, in the appropriate person of Simon de Montfort, raged gnashing her teeth outside. Even now, from the old mill on the Orbe at the bottom of its steep hill, it makes a rather grand and picturesque

appearance,—crowned with the dark mass of its cathedral, so be-turreted and be-battlemented that the vast building looks more like a feudal castle than a church.

Béziers has no longer any gates to shut against the stranger, or any wish to shut them if she had. Be he that comes heretic or orthodox, Turk, Jew, or infidel, she has a ready welcome for all, in the hope and expectation that they come to buy brandy. Few come there for any other purpose. Béziers is one of the largest brandy markets in Europe. I saw vast cask manufactories at work, making casks of the value of about 35f. of such beautiful oak, imported they told me from Rome, that its close grain and finely-marked satiny veins made me long to destine the newly-cut staves to some more honourable or at least more ornamental vocation. Béziers, too, is evidently a thriving place; and its citizens vaunt much its improvements, embellishments, and modernized aspect.

One thing, however, I did see, which struck me as an indubitable remnant of old Béziers,—a genuine specimen of the olden time, cut net with all its accessories out of the heart of a bygone century. This morsel of antiquity was an old, very old lady, saying her prayers

in the church of La Madeleine. The church was utterly deserted. Alone in the cold silence this stiff, rigid, slender figure knelt at her *priedieu*, moving her lips with a continued and rapid motion. Beside her books, crucifix, rosary, and the usual apparatus of Catholic devotion, she had on one side of her a tall candle and on the other a large hour-glass. She was evidently worshipping at so much an hour. I had never before seen *this* mode of measuring off devotion, and it attracted my attention to her. My fancy may have wronged the old lady,—we will suppose it did. But I could not help thinking, as I observed her thin pinched lips and hard strongly marked features, and reflected on the sort of notion that a devotee must have of the Deity to whom she offered adoration measured off by the hour-glass,—I could not help thinking, I say, "there at least is one inhabitant left who regrets the good old time when a heretic was burnt now and then by the pious *grand monarque* for the good of his own soul and the edification of the faithful."

LETTER XVIII.

Toulouse, April, 1848.

FRANCE has striven more systematically than perhaps any other country ever did to efface from the surface of her soil, and from the body of her social system, all trace and vestige of her past. To preserve the past—to prevent it from *being past* and keep it present—is, we know, as impossible in the moral as in the physical world,—or even more so. But the contrary operation is well-nigh as difficult. Assisted in the attempt by a greater number of social revolutions than ever happened to any other country in a similar space of time, France has been more successful in wiping out her moral and social than her physical past. It may be thought, perhaps, that with regard to the former she has completely succeeded. It may be well supposed by the Parisian that

not the smallest fragmentary portion of that antediluvian social and moral world which existed in those old, old days when Louis the Sixteenth was king,—days almost as remote to the imagination, if not to chronology, as those of Henry the Fourth—could yet be discovered existing under the sun. Yet such fragments *do* exist, and may be discovered by the persevering explorer in certain undisturbed by-paths of life,—deep, quiet pools, as it were, over which the rapid stream of change sweeps, without much moving their sleeping depths. If I were asked to indicate to the philosophic sportsman in search of such phenomena the waters where he might cast his line with the best hope of success, I should point to two or three of the old parliamentary cities of ancient France. Not to Rouen, whose vicinity to the capital and whose commercial activity have rendered it, in a social point of view, completely a modern town,—nor to some others which similar causes have influenced;—but to slumbering, dreamy Rennes, for example, or to quiet old Toulouse. These remote provincial capitals, which once formed, each in its district, the centre of attraction for the secondary noblesse, as Paris did for those of the first order, have always been affectioned

by those of their descendants to whom circumstances have preserved the means—generally slender enough—of living independently. To all Frenchmen, a country life is, under any circumstances, a penance endured only from imperious necessity. And those to whom the "non cuivis contingit adire Corinthum" of destiny forbids the Paradise of Paris, are fain to content themselves with the capital of their province.

Toulouse has the advantage of being abundantly supplied with all the creature-comforts of life,—and the important one of great cheapness. It has been flooded neither by the wealth of commerce, like Bordeaux or Lyon—nor by that of the English, like Tours or Pau. Its population, on the other hand—some eighty thousand, or thereaway—is such as to secure for it all those necessaries of French life, theatres, handsome cafés, "cercles," &c., which make so important a part of human existence on this side of the Channel. It is not, to a stranger, an interesting town externally, nor a handsome one. Built of brick, and seated in the midst of the fertile, but wholly uninteresting plain of Upper Languedoc, on the broad Garonne, which (charming as its name sounds to the imaginations of

those who have only read of the "sweet south" of France, and have never seen it) is, in truth —at Toulouse, at least—as unpoetically lumpy and pea-soup-coloured a river as can be conceived,—Toulouse consists of a congress of narrow, dingy, ill-paved, intricate, crooked lanes. It has its ancient "Place du Capitole," and its modern "Place Lafayette," both of respectable size: but of the bulk of the town the above is a truthful description. And it is in the recesses of these dim streets that are led the dim, pale lives of those semi-fossilized specimens of the ante-revolutionary world of whom I have spoken. There, on the second or third floor of some old house, of the colour of the gateway of St. James's Palace, the form of whose windows still explains the meaning of the term "croisée," and the flattened gothic arch of whose doorway claims its descent from the sixteenth century, may be found, living on say sixty pounds a year, some high-heeled and high-born old dame, with her equally ancient *suivante*,—or some M. et Me. de ——, too poor, and far too proud, to seek society among the less pure-blooded, common world of the present day.

It was with one of this class, an admirable specimen of the old French gentleman (a genus

which must shortly be classed with the megatherium and plesiosaurus), that I had the good fortune to walk over the ground of the battle of 1814. Could I have forgotten such an event, it would have been recalled to my memory by a notice in a modern French publication giving a list of Tolosan memorabilia, conceived thus: "Victoire du Maréchal Soult sur le Duc de Wellington." I had walked up to the obelisk erected by the town on the height called Calvinet, "Aux braves morts pour la patrie," and was endeavouring to understand the relative position of the two armies, when I saw, sauntering at a little distance, an old gentleman, apparently somewhat puzzled how to get rid of his time. I approached, and hazarded some question anent the localities; upon which, pulling off his hat, and disclosing a fine head well clothed with silver locks, he said that if I would permit him he should have much pleasure in becoming cicerone to an Englishman over the field of battle. I accepted, of course, with the best grace I could; and off we set, trudging over the ploughed fields, occupying the heights which formed Soult's position, in a style that made me look with some surprise at my conductor, when he told me that he had been in

England at the time of the emigration. Perhaps he interpreted my look; for he added, "I was but a young emigré, however; having been ten years old when I went with my father to England."

We began our survey by walking over the high ground which formed the very strong position occupied by the French army. It is a sort of ridge of moderate elevation, which divides the little valley of the Lers from the basin of the Garonne. Immediately at its foot flows the Canal du Midi; and on the other side of that lies the city, which is therefore completely commanded by the eminence in question. The soil is a deep, rich loam, far better adapted to the purposes of the farmers, whose wheat now covers it, than to that of the troops who had to march up the hill through it. But little trace is to be seen of the fortifications with which the French had covered the high ground. In one spot, the remains of an escarped embankment may yet be seen, in sufficient preservation to give a civilian unlearned in such matters a very adequate idea of the difficulty our troops had to encounter in marching up a steep hill, through deep, heavy soil, over a succession of high embankments, and under a tremendous

fire. As I stood on the spot, and endeavoured to realize the scene to the imagination, it appeared wholly impossible to succeed in dispossessing a determined adversary of such a position with anything like an equal amount of force. Unlike the publication which I have quoted above, my companion spoke freely of the action as a complete victory on the side of the English. He dwelt much, also, on the extreme strength and great advantages of Soult's position. But he insisted that our loss must have been infinitely greater than we ever admitted. He had been at Toulouse at the time of the battle, and had been on the ground shortly after it. He pointed out to me the spots where the greatest slaughter had taken place, and described the evidences which then spoke clearly enough of the immense loss of life. He spoke much of Soult's knowledge of Napoleon's abdication previous to the battle. I told him that it was now universally believed in England that he was not aware of what had happened in Paris. He answered, that the English might be persuaded of it, but that nobody at Toulouse could be made to believe it; that he himself was quite certain that the news had reached Soult.

We then descended into the valley of the

Lers, and walked over the ground which the British troops occupied. Not only had the valley been artificially inundated, and the bridges over the Lers blown up, as the histories of the battle state,—but the bed of that river, naturally but a small stream, had been widened, and its banks made steep. Many hundreds of men, my companion told me, had been employed on this work for days before the battle. The river runs rather deep in its bed, through a soft, clayey soil, easily dug; and was thus readily convertible into a far more serious obstacle to the advance of our troops, than it would have been in its natural state. As I saw it, the Lers appeared to me much about such a stream, in point of size and rapidity, as the Brent, in the neighbourhood of Harrow. The whole of the march along the low ground through which the river flows, beneath the northern slope of the heights bristling with Soult's cannon and infantry, and which our troops had to pass in a direction from west to east, before they charged up the hill, must have been one of no ordinary difficulty.

My old conductor and I having by this time become great friends, he proposed to point out to me before we parted the scene of

that mysterious and horrible murder which the French newspapers were full of some months ago,—and which has taken its place among the annals of crime as the "Affaire Cécille Combettes." That was the name of the murdered girl, whose fate involved circumstances of horror and atrocity which it would answer no good purpose to relate, or even to refer to, were it not that the effect produced on the public mind at Toulouse by the event was such as to throw a curious light on the state of social and religious feeling at the present day in the south of France. The accused, as many readers will no doubt remember, was a brother of the religious society denominated "Frères Ignorantins." The case was one, it must be admitted, of much doubt and difficulty. But the result of the very long inquiry was the condemnation of the prisoner to "travaux forcés à perpétuité,"—which he is now undergoing at Toulon. The fact of the matter, however, which is worth recording, is the strenuous efforts made by the religious world at Toulouse to procure evidence which should acquit the prisoner. The whole town was divided into two hostile camps upon the subject. *No* means, it is asserted, were scrupled at by the "parti

prêtre" to effect their object. My guide was, as might be supposed from his previous history, a strong legitimist,—and as such, of course, a member of the "parti prêtre." When I asked him, however, his own opinion on the matter, he answered, that the case was a very doubtful one;—that he could not help thinking, for his own part, that the "frère ignorantin" was the guilty person, but that he ought not to have been convicted on the evidence.

Then we talked of the state of parties in France; and my friend expressed his very decided opinion that further disturbances must take place before permanent tranquillity could be hoped for. He thought that if the north of France could decide matters, the Orleans family would return,—and that the Duc de Bordeaux would be sovereign as surely if the south were to choose. No party in France, he said, of any consideration in any point of view, wished or would be content with the continuance of the republic. I can add to his opinion from my own experience during the two months I have been travelling through the departments of the south, whatever weight may be due to the fact, that in talking to a vast variety of people of all classes and ranks,

I have not yet met with *one* who approves of the republic or looks upon its permanent duration as possible.

As for the stock sights of Toulouse,—its churches, town hall, museum, &c.,—I say nothing. They will all be found duly chronicled in Murray's Red Book. But I must bestow a word on a spot the most striking to me of any perhaps in Toulouse — the square of St. George, in the centre of which the unfortunate Calas underwent the iniquitous doom awarded to him by the parliament of Toulouse. It is one of the spots which seems as it were adapted to its story, and continues nearly unchanged since the time when it was lighted up by the blaze of the fagots which burned the heretic. The same dingy red brick houses, with their mullioned windows few and far between, which then were crowded with eager faces and greedy eyes, still for the most part surround it. In the middle of the space is a fountain. But unlike all the other fountains in every town in France—which have always more or less pretensions to decorative beauty—that of the ill-omened Place St. Géorges is surmounted by a huge square mass of brickwork, rough and rugged. I

could have fancied it a fitting monument of the deed which was done there.

I will conclude my letter with a morsel by way of *bonne-bouche*, of genuine and authentic royal biography. The informant from whom I have it is the *fille de chambre* at my inn, the Hôtel de l'Europe—a source of information, if not very exalted, equal, probably, in point of dignity, to that of much of the gossip which reaches ordinary mortals anent their rulers. It so chanced that my predecessor in No. 4, at the Hôtel de l'Europe, was poor Charles Albert, passing by Toulouse, in his sad journey from the fatal field of Novaro to his retirement in Portugal. He arrived in an ordinary carriage, with a valet and courier only, and nobody guessed who he was. He was put into the first bed-room that happened to be vacant, and might have quitted Toulouse in as strict incognito as he entered it, had not my friend the chamber-maid received from the hands of the valet a silver warming-pan, (!) for the purpose of warming the royal sheets. On the lid of this magnificent but tell-tale pan, were emblazoned the royal arms of Sardinia. The maid showed the pan to her master, and the cat was out of the bag. Hence monarchy may learn that when they

travel *incog.* they should leave at home the state warming-pan, with the other trappings of royalty. *Au reste*, if any inquiring mind should speculate on the possible reasons which induced the King of Sardinia to travel with so strange a piece of furniture, all that I can do towards elucidating the matter is to remind the reader that warming-pans are not generally met with in Italian inns, their functions being performed by placing between the sheets a simple apparatus consisting of a pot of burning charcoal suspended in a little wooden frame — an operation which the Italian chamber-maids call, by a metaphor more expressive than reverent, "putting a priest in the bed."

LETTER XIX.

Pau.

It would be a curious and not uninteresting thing to have a map of Europe on which should be marked all the spots which our countrymen have turned into English colonies, together with the average amount of British population in each. The number of such colonies and total amount of Englishmen thus expatriated would probably surprise even those well acquainted with the Continent. Agriculturists have a process which they employ when they wish to cover a field with turf, called inoculating. It consists in inserting bits of turf cut from another field into the surface of the one to be laid down in grass; and as these gradually spread and join each other, the entire field is in time covered. It is by a similar process that England is spreading *material* civilization over France. Let not France,

however, shriek too indignantly at this assertion,—or England be too proud of the feat attributed to her. It is strictly *material* civilization — an improved knowledge and extended use of the comforts, proprieties, and elegancies of physical existence — that the English colonies dotted all over the surface of Europe spread around them. I cannot say that I have ever observed anything which would lead me to suppose them radiating centres of moral or intellectual improvement. Not that England has nothing to teach in these respects which it might profit the nations of the Continent to learn. But somehow or other, whether from the quality of the transplanted samples of English society, or from the less readily communicable nature of such characteristics, it certainly does happen that the perceptible effects of the residence of an English colony in a foreign city are in these matters *not* in the direction of improvement.

Cleanly habits, carpets, wash-hand basins, London porter, scavengers, fish-sauce, foot-pavements, muffins, and gas-lamps, are benefits which Great Britain has introduced to the knowledge of less enlightened nations wheresoever her sons have set up their tents. To such an extent has she polished the descendant

of the "Cantaber indoctus ferre juga nostra" here, in the capital of ancient Béarn, that six *gros sous*—those smooth bell-metal sous that tell such a tale of the doings of La Belle France—were this morning tendered to me as the balance of my half-franc on purchasing a most unexceptionable *penny* bun, wrapped in a bit of paper after the most approved Oxford-street fashion. On the other hand, professional mendicity seems invariably to thrive with more than ordinary vigour in our neighbourhood. Beggars seem to spring up under the feet of Englishmen on the Continent as surely and abundantly as cowslips are said to do under those of dancing fairies. Throughout the south of France, from the frontier of Italy hither, I had noticed the marked diminution if not entire disappearance of mendicity. Here it is as bad almost as in Italy, and even more shameless. A buxom well-to-do farmer's wife trudging to market will stretch out the hand and beg! It is undeniable also, be the immediate cause what it may, that dishonesty and fraud in a hundred petty matters, which do not from their infinitesimal amount the less indicate the absence of probity, are observable in localities haunted by the English, that in other places are not found.

A little higher in the social scale, the influence of English neighbourhood, as far as it can be observed to exert any, is generally, it is to be feared, equally unfavourable. Social exclusiveness—a spirit of cast based on separative ideas of the least defensible description—a rigid intolerance of many things either wholly insignificant or pardonable, joined to a time-serving tolerance of much that ought never to be tolerated—these are especially English sins. We are the true Pharisees of modern European society; and there is reason to think that to a certain degree we infect the French society with which we mix with the vulgarity of our finery in such matters. Of course I do not pretend that my stay of a few days at Pau can have enabled me to judge how far such may or may not be the case *here*. I speak generally. My visit, however, short as it has been, has been long enough for me to ascertain that in Pau, as in most other English settlements on the Continent, the society is divided into two hostile camps. So very ordinary a phenomenon would hardly be worth remarking were it not that the cause of war in Pau is really an original one. Politics are a recognised cause of strife:—that men should hate one another for religion's sake is nothing new.

"Lovely woman"—to translate my Horace—"has before Helen been the cause of fierce war,"—and after, many a time. But it is none of these everyday causes that has moved the deep ire of the Pau-ites. There, the god of war wears the gait and appearance of Æsculapius. The apple, or rather the bolus, of discord is thrown by the third of the black Graces; or, to state the absurd fact in less metaphorical language, the whole of the English world of Pau is divided into two bitterly hostile parties,—consisting one of the patients, admirers, supporters, and partisans of Dr. A.; the other of those of his rival, Dr. B. I am assured that the party-feeling is carried to such an extent as almost to forbid all social intercourse between these medical Montagues and Capulets. A healthy man, I suppose, who did not enrol himself under either banner, would stand between the hostile camps reprobated by all sides!

Au reste, I think that of all the sites selected by the nomade English for the erection of their tents, there is not one more worthy of their predilection than this of Pau. It is in truth a lovely spot: and the principal beauties it has to offer are accessible to the old, the indolent, or the infirm, as well as to the young and

active. For myself, though I cannot honestly claim to belong altogether to the latter category, I do not yet quite consent to be included in the former. And I do not know a more delightful walk than that along the terrace of the "Parc" at Pau. A mountain scramble among crags, precipices, cataracts, and snow, is very well in its way,—exciting both to mind and to body. The romantic Londoner may fancy himself a Manfred in mackintosh for the time being, and strive to think of Astarte and avalanches more than of the good fire and "biftec aux pommes" awaiting his return to his inn. But these high-seasoned delights are one thing, and the tranquil unfatigued oft-repeated enjoyment of a lovely view is another. Conceive *close* to the town a terrace extending above a mile along an elevated bank overlooking the "Gave de Pau," as the river is termed. The walk is as nicely kept as any in an English garden. It runs amid, and is sheltered by, a thick wood, chiefly of beech and oak,—some of the trees magnificent, yet so disposed as to permit continual views of the chain of the mountains. Seats invite you to pause in all the choicest spots. At your feet is the river,—beyond that a middle distance, richly wooded and beautifully undulating,—and then a chain

of snow-capped summits of a hundred leagues extent, or thereaway. The sharp, towering, well-defined Pic du Midi de Pau is the leading object to the right, and the huge mass of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre to the left. From this noble walk you may study at your ease (which, let the Manfreds say what they will, is a good ingredient in a calm, thoughtful, *observative* pleasure) all the infinitely varied effects of light and shade, storm and sunshine, morning and evening, over a hundred peaks, ravines, snow-fields, and naked crags. This "Parc" has been compared to the "Enge" at Berne: I think it decidedly superior. It is true that there are no mountain masses equal to those of the Eiger, Jungfrau, and others of the Bernese Oberland. But the extent of the chain open to your view is far wider—the principal objects are nearer to the eye—and, above all, the foreground and middle distance are far superior at Pau. It is the most splendid and enjoyable *town walk* that I know; and others of a yet wider experience than mine have pronounced it unequalled in Europe.

This lovely "Parc" is the remaining fragment of the special and favourite hunting-ground of the old Béarnese monarchs, whose

line became that of the kings of France in the person of Henry the Fourth. The magnificently-placed chateau, the residence of the later sovereigns of Béarn, was his birthplace; and has always remained crown property to the time of the last revolution. It is the grand lion and great glory of Pau; and truly deserves to be so, as well for its noble and highly picturesque appearance as for the singularly varied and interesting historical associations connected with it. Louis-Philippe much delighted in it; and he has repaired most of the dilapidations caused partly by time, but more by long neglect—most of all by the wanton mischiefs done at the period of the first revolution. Not content with merely repairing, he had improved, beautified, and even added to the original structure. Several magnificent rooms have been furnished, chiefly with chefs-d'œuvre of tapestry and carving of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Much of the work of restoration, however, remained to be done, when all was suddenly cut short by the revolution—and three hundred workmen had to be discharged at a minute's warning. The republic, accordingly, is little liked at Pau.

Not the least indignant of the grumblers at

the new order of things was the old servant who acted as guardian and showman at the chateau. It was difficult to say which had afflicted him most, the proclamation of the republic or the late occupation of one of the suites of rooms under his charge by Abd-el-Kader and his family. It was some months since these troublesome guests had departed from Pau; and he assured us that all his efforts in the way of washing, scrubbing and ventilating, had been insufficient to remove the traces of their sojourn there. The truth of his assertion was sufficiently evident to more senses than one. His description of the state of the five or six fine old rooms when the Emir and his suite quitted them needed some such confirmation to render it credible. One very noble chamber with fine inlaid oak flooring and wainscoting, splendid tapestry, and a highly ornamented vast white marble fireplace, had been treated the worst of all. This room, once the bed-chamber of Jeanne d'Albret, and in whose walls the eyes of the infant "Henri de Navarre" first opened, was occupied by Abd-el-Kader's women. They insisted on roasting mutton, our indignant guide informed us, in the middle of the floor of the room which had been given up to them "*cire*,"

he declared with all the professional pride of a French domestic, till you could have seen your face in it. There was space in the hearth to have made a dozen roasts,—but that did not suit them. The whole floor and walls as high as they reached were covered with a thick coating of suet, tallow, and filth of all conceivable kinds. The wainscot, notwithstanding scraping, still bore marks of ill-usage. Fortunately, the fine tapestry had been, with wise forethought, covered over. Our talkative old cicerone told us how he and the other attendants had played all sorts of tricks and tried all possible schemes to get a peep at this same greasy and mutton-roasting harem. But in vain!—the old Emir was too wary and careful. The ladies of Pau used to visit them occasionally, from curiosity;—but never empty-handed,—as the first question of the Desert-chief's ladies was sure to be, "What presents have you brought us?"

Of course the grand object of the hero-worship of Pau, and the principal figure in all the historical reminiscences of the chateau, is Henry the Fourth, so long the special favourite of France, and still the favourite of Béarn;—"lou Gentilome Gascoun, lou gran e ponderous Henric," as his contemporary historian the

physician Ader calls him in his work published in the dialect of Béarn, at Toulouse, in 1610. Henry the Fourth has always been to the French what Elizabeth has been to the English, and king Saturn of golden-age celebrity was to the ancient Roman,—an impersonation of that vague idea of "good old times" which every man who finds the world around him difficult, unmanageable, and troublesome, is inclined to believe in. It is the old especially who have faith in "good old times." They found the world, they remember, some thirty or forty years ago a brighter and smoother one than they find it now-a-days,—of course; and the imagination concludes that farther back it was brighter still. We have all, however, now become philosophers enough to know that all times are good when old,—and if not all equally bad when present, that the advantage is certainly not in favour of the older days. And further if, not having the fear of Mr. Carlyle before one's eyes, one were inclined for a little iconoclastic sport, it would not be very difficult to show cause for pulling from their pedestals both the English and the French idol,—the heroine and the hero. Though it must be admitted that Henry "lou gran e ponderous" was in truth, on Mr. Carlyle's

theory, a great man and genuine hero,—a true *king*, "*kœnig*,"—one who *could* do and did that which lay before him to do. How far much of what he did had been better left undone,—how far his ambition was of vulgar quality, his views narrow and selfish, and his ideas those of the day, and nowise in advance of his day—are questions that remain to be considered. Certes, he was a right active, able, vigorous and energetic *doer*,—and therefore, according to Mr. Carlyle, a great man. George Sand, again, who divides the world's leaders into doers and thinkers, and assigns a very secondary rank to the former, would deem him not so great.

The great lion of all, then, contained in the chateau in the estimation of the Pau folks, is the huge tortoise-shell said to have been the cradle of the infant Henry. They really seem to regard it as the Palladium of the town. A story is told how, when the terrorists of the first revolution were determined to destroy this relic of royalty, another shell was ingeniously substituted, and the true royal cradle thus preserved. There is reason, however, to deem this story extremely problematical, and to think that the substitution was contrived after and not before the destruction of the

genuine relic. Such was the opinion expressed to me by a very competent authority, the son of the last governor of the chateau under the old *régime*. A very handsome and curious carved oak bedstead, placed in the chateau by Louis-Philippe, is more authentic, though not *quite* what it professes to be. It is, as a local historian explains, not the bedstead of Henry the Fourth, but that of Gabrielle d'Estrées!

The really most interesting object, however, still remaining at Pau, is a statue of Henry, executed during his lifetime by Francavilla. It had always been traditionally said to be an admirable likeness; and M. Lenoir, the well-known antiquary, has declared, in his description of the monuments in the Museum of the Petits-Augustins, that he was able to convince himself of the truth of this assertion when he was present at the opening of the tombs of the kings of France in 1793 at St. Denis. The body of Henry the Fourth was then found in such a state of preservation as to admit of the observation that the features were accurately those of Francavilla's statue. "This marble of the sixteenth century," says a historian of Pau, "throws more light on the character of Henry than a hundred biographies." To a certain degree this is true; though *I* do not

read by the light so thrown the same information as does the writer cited. To my perception, the face, though handsome and to a certain degree engaging, is not a grand or noble one. The forehead is poor and weak. There are pride, intelligence, good-humour, quickness of temper and of wit, activity and vigour of temperament in the features; but I could see no indications of the higher qualities of mind. The face is not like the generality of the portraits of Henry the Fourth. The pose is much praised for dignity and majesty:—but it is French dignity, which we should call an air of fanfaronnade and strut.

A better appreciation of "Le bon roi Henri" than has yet been arrived at, might probably be obtained from a careful examination of the four 4to volumes of his letters recently published by M. Berger de Xivrey, under the authority of the government:—volumes to which the archives still preserved at Pau contributed much. I had intended giving you a gossiping notice or two anent these archives, the most interesting provincial collection probably in the kingdom;—but have left myself no room.

LETTER XX.

Orthez.

I MENTIONED at the conclusion of my last letter, that I had intended saying a few words about the mass of interesting, and in many instances historically important documents, preserved in the ancient archives of the town of Pau, formerly the capital of the independent kingdom of Béarn, and more recently the seat of a sovereign parliament. They consist of the most heterogeneous materials. There are the ancient "fors" of Béarn, the statutes, customs, privileges,—that is, according to which the country was governed; the *constitution*, as we should say, in these days. And a highly liberal one it was; jealously hedged about with precautions and checks against arbitrary power, none the less stringent for being most primitively simple in their mode of operation. Highly interest-

ing documents these are, and invaluable to the legal antiquary and the constitutional historian! Then, there are records innumerable of judicial proceedings and sentences rendered; royal letters not a few; and, by no means least in interest, the household books of the later sovereigns of Béarn, ending with those of Henry the Fourth, and some very detailed and minute inventories of furniture and various property belonging to Henry, his father, his mother, and his sister. A portion of these papers was deemed of sufficient interest to induce the commission established by the late government for the examination of the national records, to require that they should be sent to Paris for perusal. This was done:—and they have been duly returned to the town to which the custody of them so rightly belongs.

Many of the most curious pages of these valuable papers, as well as some of the most interesting chapters in the chronicles of the storied Château of Pau, relate to the history and personal characters of that very remarkable series of extraordinarily gifted women who, one after the other, inhabited and drew the eyes of Europe to the remote little Court of Pau during the greater portion of the 16th century. Never, probably, in any time or

country, did one family, royal or other, show in similarly close and unbroken connexion such a brilliant constellation of female talent and beauty as that presented by the following five princesses of the House of Navarre: 1st. Catherine, heiress of the House of Foix, married to Jean d'Albret; 2nd. Marguerite de Valois, daughter-in-law of Catherine, married to her son, Henry the Second of Navarre; 3rd. Jeanne d'Albret, daughter of Marguerite, married to Anthony of Bourbon; 4th. Marguerite de Valois, daughter-in-law of Jeanne, being married to her son, Henry the Fourth; and 5th. Catherine, daughter of Jeanne and sister of Henry the Fourth.

What a list! sufficiently piquant in its bare enumeration, I hope, to render a gossiping chapter of my Béarnese gleanings respecting these ladies not unacceptable to you.

Catherine of Foix, the first of our demi-decade of female worthies, was left heiress of Béarn and Navarre by the death of her brother, Francis-Phœbus, who perished from poison, administered to him by means of a flute! "Aussi tost qu'il l'eut approchée de sa bouche," says an old chronicle of Navarre, "il se sentit frappé d'une poison si violente,

que tous les secours de sa dolente mère et de ses medicins et serviteurs ne le peuvent garantir qu'il ne mourust dans deux heures après; charité attribuée aux roys de Castille avec grande apparance de vérité, et dont on en descoubrit de grands indices." The young Catherine, thus left unprotected in her Château of Pau with her mother Magdelaine, had much difficulty in escaping from the fate of her brother. Such an heiress in such a position was, of course, the object of all sorts of unscrupulous schemes and bold hopes on the part of the wild and lawless princes and barons of her neighbourhood. The conspiracy of a knot of nobles, who had bribed the castle pastrycook, one Thomas Brunet, to poison both her and the lady Magdelaine her mother, was discovered. But Catherine had this chance in her favour: that there were two modes of obtaining her property; she might be murdered or married. Pretenders to her hand, accordingly were not wanting. The choice among these seems as a matter of course to have been left to her subjects; who gave the preference to the Lord of Albret, or Labrit, an obscure and remote castle in the midst of the most desolate solitudes of the Landes.

The young couple were crowned as sove-

reigns of Navarre, at Pampeluna, in 1494. The details of this ceremony are related with great minuteness by the old Béarnese historian Favyn; and some of them are so curious as to be worth mentioning. On the altar were placed a sword, two crowns, two sceptres, and two balls of gold. The king girt on the sword, drew it, and made "deux ou trois tours d'escrime;" then he and Catherine themselves took the crowns and placed them on their heads, and assumed each the ball and sceptre. Thus crowned, they stepped on a shield painted with the arms of Navarre, and resting on twelve bars of iron which passed beneath it. Thereupon, four-and-twenty deputies of the States of Navarre took the ends of the twelve bars in their hands, and thus lifted high into the air their majesties, standing on the shield. This they did thrice; crying at each time, "Royal! Royal! Royal!" while the newly-crowned pair flung handfuls of money among the people.

It was the last time that this ceremonial was ever enacted; for Ferdinand the Catholic, aided by an iniquitous bull of Pope Julius the Second, soon after seized on Navarre, whose rightful sovereigns had no means of defending their possessions against so powerful a thief.

John of Albert, indeed—of whom Favyn records that he was the best prince in the world, fond of learning, and so little caring for royal state, that he was wont "to dance in the streets of Pau with the *bourgeoises*"—was accused by his wife of want of energy in political matters. It is recorded of her that she used frequently to say—"Johan de Labrit, Johan de Labrit, si tu fueses Reyna y yo Roy, Navarra no estaria perdida!"

Among the papers in the archive chamber at Pau, are several very curiously minute inventories of the various property removed from the château by Louis the Thirteenth. A receipt signed by the royal hand, and bearing the great seal, acknowledges the transmission of ten coffers filled with jewellery, plate, &c., and named severally Abraham, Jacob, Esau, Job, Aaron, Moses, David, Solomon, Lazarus, and St. John! A curious singularity worth mentioning, also, is, that in the catalogue of the contents of these ten biblical chests, the words of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, &c., are used for the purpose of enumeration, in the place of numerals; so that No. 1. is marked "*Pater*"—No. 2. "*Noster*"—No. 3. "*Qui*," &c. Among these lists are those of various properties belonging to Catherine of Foix. That of her

books is interesting, as showing the style of reading of a princess of that day. We find Chronicles of France and England—'The Chronicle of Jehan Froissart'—'Le Livre d'Heracle'—The Bible in French—'*Un livre nommé Bocasse, escript à la main, bien historié*'—A Chronicle of Count Gaston in the Catalan Tongue—The Romance of Aymerich de Narbonne—'*Un livre parlant de la Lune*,' &c.

Such were the studies with which Catherine of Foix strove to occupy thoughts that would painfully stray to the lost Navarre across the mighty mountain barrier on which she gazed —doubtless many a time with bitter feeling— from her chamber-window in the Castle of Pau. The wrong which had been done her was to the last a bitter drop in her cup; and an old historian recording her death, which took place at Mont-de-Marsan, in 1517, says, that she died *with her eyes turned towards Navarre.*

It was ten years after the death of Catherine that the noble halls of Pau were again occupied by perhaps the most distinguished princess of Christendom. In 1527, Catherine's son, Henry the Second of Navarre, brought home thither his beautiful and accomplished wife,

Marguerite de Valois, sister of Francis the First, and widow of the Duc d'Alençon. This Marguerite des Marguerite, as her royal brother first, and after him all the courtiers and *littérateurs* of Europe, termed her—this pearl of pearls—the loveliest and learnedest, wittiest and most brilliant woman of her day —spoke, as we are assured, Latin, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew! The friend alike of Calvin, and of the licentious Bonaventure des Perriers, we find her at one moment hearing the preaching of the fathers of the Reformation in the vaults of her Castle of Pau, with barricaded doors; and in the next, "astounding the Béarnese court," as Brantôme assures us, by her elegant dancing of the "branle de la torche," the "Chacone," and the "Pavane d'Espagne:"—*Ionic movements*, wholly unknown till then to the primitive mountaineers. She was a deeply read and habitual student of Holy Writ; and the author (partially certainly, if not wholly) of the "Heptameron," the most licentious book of that licentious day. Clément Marot describes her as "corps féminin, cœur d'homme, et tête d'ange;" and Brantôme sums up his enthusiastic eulogies by protesting "Qu'en faict de joieusetés, et de galanteries, elle montroit qu'elle savoit

tion among the people of Béarn has been produced wholly by the active calumnies of the Romanist priesthood; but, unfortunately, the undeniable evidence of records establishes a few facts of a nature to make the popular traditions only too credible. This is certain, that Jeanne forbade her subjects to celebrate or be present at mass, *on pain of death*. It is certain, also, that in her residence at Pau, on the 24th of August, 1569, ten Catholic gentlemen, who had been taken prisoners at Orthez, under promise of sparing their lives, were massacred in cold blood as they sat at table. The only thing to be said in palliation of such acts is, that she acted in the spirit of her times, and encouraged the spread of theological truth after the most approved polemical fashion of that day. People who will conduct an argument on such principles, can but admit that their adversary has fairly the whip-hand in the controversy, when they are finally confuted,—as poor Jeanne was on the 10th of June, 1572, by her terrible and profoundly orthodox antagonist Catherine de Médicis, by the help of the Florentine perfumer René's poisoned gloves. The only important part of the matter is, that the history of those sad days should be so read aright that we should

draw from it as our conclusion, not "what a detestable, heart-hardening, unchristian religion is that of Rome, but what a detestable, heart-hardening, and unchristian-like thing is theological rancour!"

Jeanne d'Albret was succeeded in the lordly chambers of Pau by the daughter of her murderess, then become the wife of her son: for Henry married Marguerite de Valois, daughter of Catherine de Médicis, and sister of Charles the Ninth, on the 18th of August, 1572, just two months and eight days after his mother's death. This second Marguerite was also one of the most beautiful and most accomplished women of that day, and quite as good a wife as her husband deserved. His own estimate of his deserts, or at least of his requirements in this respect, was not so moderate. He writes to Sully that he required seven things in a wife:—that she should be beautiful, virtuous, sweet-tempered, witty, fruitful, rich, and of royal birth. Nevertheless, this "vert galant" adds immediately after, "I would willingly content myself with the Infante of Spain, old as she is, if with her I married the Low Countries." The whole of this letter, in which Henry passes in review all the marriageable princesses of Europe, and considers the

reasons *pro* and *con.* respecting each of them, is exceedingly curious and amusing. It was written when he had just divorced Marguerite, —to whom, it must be owned, a better husband would have been less suited. The life which she led during the five years that she passed at Pau not a little scandalized the good Béarnese. Marguerite died at Paris, on the 15th of March, 1615; leaving behind her some volumes of memoirs, sundry poems, of which Ronsard thought highly—and a good many debts.

A more unexceptional specimen of female royalty shall close our demi-decade of Béarnese princesses. The gentle and unfortunate Catherine, Henry the Fourth's younger sister, was born in 1558, at Pau, and passed the only happy years of her life there. It was to her that her brother confided the regency of Béarn during his absence; and many are the memorials which remain of the wisdom, justice, and gentleness of her administration. Such was the confidence that she had inspired in the Béarnese, that over and over again her simple note of hand sufficed to raise the sums which her brother needed for carrying on the war. He repaid these services by separating her forcibly from the Comte de Soissons, whom

she loved, and who wished to marry her, and compelling her to marry the Duc de Bar et de Lorrain. During the years of her secluded life at Pau, while she yet hoped that her "dream of life" should be realized, it is recorded that she frequently consoled herself with Virgil's "Grata superveniet quæ non sperabitur hora." This hour, however, never shone for poor Catherine; and when she was compelled to leave Béarn, amid the tears and misgivings of the entire province, to make the loveless marriage forced on her, she left all hope of happiness behind her. She lived five years with her husband, in the practice of all the domestic virtues; and died in 1604, of "mal de pays,"—flattering herself that her sickness was caused by pregnancy, and saying, "qu'elle ne pouvait trop souffrir, ni la maladie être trop fâcheuse, pour devenir mère." Poor soul! Hope deceived her with the sweet expectation that the void in her aching heart might yet be filled up by the joys and affections of maternity.

Catherine was the last princess who inhabited the Château of Pau; and the inventories of property there, which its abandoned condition caused to be made, and which I have already cited, afford a proof that in her

younger days, before state policy had laid its blasting hand on her, she too had there her hours of gaiety and frolic. All the articles left there by her are separately catalogued; and amongst them are several dresses of "*taffetas faits à la matelotte pour mascarade.*" Her sheets of Holland linen without seam are also mentioned.

I meant to have concluded my letter with a few words of description of the pretty English-like country between Pau and Orthez; but my five Pau princesses have left me no space. I cannot refrain, however, from giving you, as a specimen of southern phraseology, the following words of my hostess here,—a magnificently black-eyed old lady of sixty or seventy, who must once have been superbly handsome. She was describing to me her horror and indignation at the company of vagabonds and *mauvais sujets* whom one of the *red* candidates collected the other day in her house, when he came canvassing to Orthez. "I looked," she said, "like the corpse of one who had died of a mortal hatred without having been able to strike one stroke of the dagger!" What do you think of that? Does it not sound very like being near the frontier of Spain?

LETTER XXI.

St. Sebastian, May, 1848.

A LARGE number of those who are attracted to the South of France by the baths and picturesque beauties of the Pyrenees, are tempted to make a dash over the frontier of Spain as far as St. Sebastian. Very many English, and a still greater number of French, would on no account extend their excursion beyond this point. They are assured at Bayonne that French civilization extends thus far and no farther. All beyond is vaguely represented to the imaginations of pleasure-hunting tourists as a land exclusively peopled by sanguinary banditti, living wholly on rancid oil and garlic. Leaving it, therefore, to be determined by circumstances, and a nearer inspection of this *terra incognita*, whether or no we should venture ourselves within its limits, we determined to journey from Bayonne to St. Sebastian, like others, to see Spain. So here we are, incontestably on Spanish ground; and from

a very sufficiently comfortable room in the incontestably Spanish "Parador Isabel," I proceed to write you an account of how we came, and what we have seen. It is the more worth while, perhaps, to do this, inasmuch as the traveller, if he follow the stream and the advice of the Bayonnais excursionists, will in truth see little or nothing very Spanish or interesting in any way in the course of his trip to St. Sebastian; whereas, if you will follow the advice here tendered you instead, you may really see a good deal.

The journey, indeed, as generally performed, does not appear a very formidable one. An excellent macadamized road—the *grande route* from Paris to Madrid—has passed from Bayonne to St. Sebastian for the last two or three years. Before that, it left the latter town to the right, going southwards, and passed over the heights of Hernani, well remembered by British legionaries: a severe ascent avoided by the new line. For those who do not travel in their own carriages, this bit of frontier road is traversed in about five hours by some three or four diligences daily. And still more reassuring, the same vehicles may be observed as constantly returning, and bringing live passengers with them; so that at all events the significant "vestigia nulla retrorsum" warning is wanting to the terrors of the undertaking.

Nevertheless, if the stranger will take my advice, he will avail himself of this civilized facility only as far as Irun, the first town in Spain, and not more than a couple of miles distant from the bridge over the Bidassoa, which divides the two countries. Here let him pause awhile, in the very tolerable quarters which he will find in the house of Ramon Echeandea; where one of the attendants—an exceedingly pretty girl by the way—speaks a little French. For in this, as in many other respects, he will find that his first entry into Spain much more resembles an over-head-and-ears plunge than his passage from any one to another of the countries of Europe ever did. Thus, not as at Dover, at Calais, or at any of the frontier towns of Italy or Germany, will the traveller find the language of the limitrophe country abundantly understood at Irun. In the custom-house, in the coach-offices, in the shops, Spanish you must speak, *tant bien que mal*, or remain mute. Even here at St. Sebastian, a much less completely Spanish place than Irun, I wandered the other day through half the town, without being able to obtain information where the post-office was, because I had neglected to ascertain from the dictionary before starting, that "cartas" and not "letras" was the proper word to use. To the unfledged Spanish scholar, therefore, the pretty maid at Irun will prove a guardian angel.

The visitor should endeavour to make his first step into Spain on a fête day. Should it chance, however, that the day of his arrival is not one, the probabilities are that the morrow will be. We stepped from the diligence into the streets of Irun in the midst of a high holiday—the first of three in succession! Having secured quarters for the night, of course our first move was to sally forth and look about us. The traveller *quitting* Spain would doubtless laugh at the notion of setting forth, all excitement and curiosity, to see the poor little frontier town of Irun. But for those to whom Spain and Spanish sights and sounds are all strange and new, there is matter enough of observation and amusement. There are the town musicians—Basque, however, rather than Spanish, these, but equally new and striking —who have just arrived at the town-hall, preceding the authorities on their return from high mass, playing a shrill and lively Basque air all the way. The eight or ten grave seniors who constitute the municipality of Irun, proceed to the council chamber, and the town band remain in front of the building, labouring in their vocation with a capability of endurance altogether marvellous. There are three of them, paid by the town to amuse the inhabitants on every holiday. Two of these hold in the left hand a sort of fife, while with the right they beat a peculiarly shaped little drum, which hangs by a

sling from the bent elbow of the left arm; the third carries a rather larger, though still small, drum only, on which he employs both hands. This important and most active trio are very jauntily dressed in clean white trousers, very smart crimson silk sashes worn nearly a foot broad around the body, and neat short velveteen jackets.

Then, there is to be observed the architecture of the houses,—at least of the older among them,—of a style highly characteristic and wholly different from anything on the other side of the frontier. Their far-projecting roofs resting on richly carved and ornamented beams of wood or on supports of stone; their balconied fronts projecting each story beyond that beneath it, and gay with many-coloured awnings; their massive entrances often by a low round arch which looks solid enough to last for ever; all combine to produce an effect new, striking, and highly picturesque. Nor are the figures which animate the scene less calculated to add to its novelty and brightness. The men, a fine athletic race, with generally strongly marked and sharp-cut features, and a somewhat hard expression of countenance, wear blue or scarlet cloth caps, shaped very much like the Scotch bonnet, with a black tassel hanging from the centre of the crown. These, added to the scarlet sashes and clean white holiday shirts, and in some instances trousers, also contribute much to the general effect of

brilliant colouring which these people seem so fond of. In the holiday dresses of the women, the brightest hues, and especially the most brilliant and full tints of red and yellow, predominate. The general amount of *taste* displayed was far inferior perhaps to that observable among the *grisette* class in France; but the average of cleanliness and neatness was as much superior to that which any assembly of French *peasantry* would have presented. And many of those who were thronging the "plaza" of Irun on this festal occasion were of that class. I and my companion agreed, that we had rarely if ever seen so large a portion of female beauty as we observed among the women here and in the neighbourhood. Fine, clear, dark complexions, and well-proportioned elastic figures, are common, —magnificent eyes, good teeth, and the finest hair ever seen, almost universal. The latter, generally very beautiful in quality as well as perfectly extraordinary in quantity, is plaited into one, or more often into two, long tapering tresses, and is let to hang down the back, often as low as the knees. The heads of the elder women are covered with a handkerchief, cotton or silk, according to the means of the wearer, but always of the most brilliant colours, and almost always perfectly clean, and very coquettishly put on. Among the peasantry, a blue dress tucked

up over a scarlet petticoat often adds to the general mass of vivid colouring.

But it was in the cool of the evening that all this gay and brightly clad population were to be seen truly enjoying their holiday. About five o'clock the indefatigable drum and fife men began marching with a serious and business-like air up and down the "plaza,"—fortunately for us immediately in front of our windows,—and playing a brisk march. This they continued till they had collected a sufficient number of listeners to open the ball. They then ceased marching up and down, and began to play a variety of dances. At first the dancers were all children, little girls mostly of thirteen or fourteen years old, together with several nursemaids holding infants in their arms, whom they danced in time to the measure. This we afterwards found to be an inseparable and peculiar feature in a Basque holiday dance. The dancing education of the population certainly begins betimes. It is a pretty and amusing sight to see the little brats held high up with wonderful strength and dexterity of wrist and arm—one hand under their feet and the other grasping their clothes,—and thus danced and twirled, like so many fantoccini puppets, high above the heads of the crowd. Gradually the assembly increases. Still, the great majority are females:—but waiting for the gentlemen is out

of the question. The fife and drum keep going, —and not a soul, old or young, can hold her limbs quiet. Those who do not professedly stand up to dance cannot remain still, but keep shuffling, wriggling, and nodding, in time to the music. Even if the legs are at rest, the arms and shoulders are sure to be performing a dance of their own. And this will continue for hours, without pause or rest of any kind. Assuredly these people are true and earnest votaries of Terpsichore. Towards dusk the lords of the creation begin to appear upon the scene. Before that they have probably been playing fives,—of which game the Basques are very fond, and at which they are great proficients. Every little town has its tolerably good fives-court; and the only decently good game of hand-fives that I have seen played since I took part in one on the fives-court at Winchester, was at Irun. When the gentlemen have arrived on the scene of action, the dancing, as may be imagined, is not less active and spirited than before; though, in truth, no stimulus of this kind has seemed to have been wanting to the ceaseless activity of the previous three hours. The dances, however, in which the men join, have more of regularity and more attempt at figure and steps. Very many girls, however, and those for the most part the nicest looking, continue to dance by themselves. This seems to arise from the fact, that all the men who

dance are peasants. The men of the town, belonging to the same class of society as the better sort of girls who dance on the "plaza," do not condescend to join in the amusement at all. Between nine and ten the ball was brought to a conclusion; and the musicians,—glad, it may be supposed, if nobody else in the town was, that the fête had at last come to an end—turned to move homewards. In a quarter of an hour afterwards the "plaza," so lately ringing with noise of all sorts, was tranquilly lying beneath the clear southern moonlight in perfect stillness.

A second day at Irun may be well and pleasantly employed in rambling over the many-storied sites in the neighbourhood, rendered memorable by the military achievements of various ages on this border land of two antipathetic nations. But of all these scenes and deeds too much has already been written to justify me in occupying your time by any attempt to re-describe them. I will content myself with strongly advising the traveller to ascend, as I did, the noted hill of St. Marcial. For I certainly felt, as I surveyed thence the course of the Bidassoa from the bridge of Behobia to the sea, and the adjoining coasts to the west and the heights to the north-east, that I never before rightly understood the nature of the successful operations of our troops here or the amount of the difficulties to be contended against. Of this

also the climbing of that hill convinced me—that however justly superior abilities, energy, and strategic skill may be claimed for our leader and officers, yet that they would not have obtained the same results with other troops,—or, in other words, that the sinews, muscles, and volitions generated by Anglo-Saxon blood, can do that which other races have not sufficient physical and spiritual strength to accomplish.

If, notwithstanding his Saxon qualifications, the traveller should feel averse to undertaking the ascent on foot in the face of a Spanish sun, he may ride to the top with perfect ease. For myself, I was received at the summit in a manner that no little startled me. An old man, who lives in a little cottage attached to the chapel on the pinnacle of the rock, ran out as I surmounted the last crest of the hill, and, without uttering a word, stooped down and began feeling the calves of my legs and the sinews behind my knees. It seemed he had been watching my somewhat brisk ascent from his aërial look-out with no small admiration; for presently, having concluded his examination to his satisfaction, he said, looking up, "Mucha forza! mucha forza!" and then pointing to his own bare, copper-coloured, and sinewy, though emaciated shanks, he added, with a sigh, "Viejo! viejo!" I found afterwards that he could talk about as much French as Spanish, his own vernacular being Basque.

Even if it should cost him another day, the traveller should not quit Irun without visiting Fuenterrabià. It is not merely for the "magic of a name," or for the sake of hearing a "Fontarabian echo"—though many a stray one may be caught wandering among ruined walls and deserted houses; but, for the sake of seeing an unadulterated bit of Spain, which this decaying town most truly is, although the French village of Andaye stands looking at it from the opposite bank of the Bidassoa, not half a mile off. It is within an easy walk of Irun; but it is better fun, if you have a companion with you, to go there "en cacolas"—a mode of locomotion peculiar to this corner of Basque land, and used on both sides of the border. At Bayonne you may go to the little bathing-place, Biaritz, or any other such small excursion, "en cacolet." A game at cacolet, like one at cribbage, must be played by two—neither more nor less—and is performed in this wise. On a horse, mule, or donkey, is placed first a rude sort of pack-saddle; a pair of seats lashed together with ropes, which pass over the saddle, is then suspended on either side, much like a pair of panniers, in which the persons to be carried sit facing the horse's head. But as the whole adjustment depends on the equilibrium being maintained, and not at all on any girth, it is absolutely necessary, in the first place, that the partners in the venture, if not

naturally of the same weight, should be rendered so by some contrivance or other. In the next place, it is equally essential that both should reach their seats at the same moment, and that no descent therefrom should be attempted by either singly, or without having duly concerted the move with his consort. The consequence of the slightest neglect of these laws of the cacolet may be easily foreseen. When they are duly observed, and a partner judiciously chosen, it is a lazy, sociable, agreeable sort of mode of locomotion enough. On the occasion of my ride to Fuenterrabià, it was my wife who occupied the opposite side of the see-saw; and paving-stone after paving-stone had to be slung beneath her seat by our grave and impassible guide before the needful equilibrium could be obtained. Once mounted, we progressed charmingly, though a little nervously when suspended over the side of a bridge or whisked round a corner; till our cautious old steed, slowly clambering over the broken pavement of the steep street which leads up under the three successive gateways of Fuenterrabià's once formidable but now ruined fortifications, and carrying us decorously up the picturesque old street amid the grave salutations of the Fuenterrabians, landed us with happy simultaneousness on a favourable parapet wall beside the church.

The stranger needs no directions for seeing the

sights of Fuenterrabià. He has only to look around him. And it is difficult to conceive anything much more strange to northern eyes, more characteristic and more picturesque withal, than the chaos of ruined gateways, walls, and towers, ivy-coloured battlements, richly ornamented roofs projecting over dilapidated balconies, ruined mansions with nothing undecayed about them save the huge and magnificently carved scutcheons over their doorless entrances, which group themselves into all sorts of fantastic combinations around him, with the blue waters of the Bay of Biscay for a background.

Leaving Irun the next day, we rode to a village called Renteria; and there got a boat which took us to the exquisitely picturesque little town of Passages, situate on the margin of its land-locked harbour. Let no one within reach of Passages (pronounce Passàkhes) fail to visit it, or be induced to pass on to St. Sebastian by the assurance that he will see it perfectly well from the high road. He will so see nothing of it! The road in truth passes along the shore of the bay, and the town may be seen across it. But those who content themselves with such seeing will have but little idea of the beauty near them. The town—containing many houses once of high pretension, and still marked as "casas solares" by magnificently carved scutcheons—is squeezed into a strip of land between the

shore of the deep land-locked bay and the hill which rises precipitously behind it; a strip so narrow and so inaccessible as to ensure the streets, or rather the street of Passages, remaining as virgin of wheels as the Queen of the Adriatic herself. At some height above the roofs of the houses, the side of the hill which thus backs the town is clothed with a rich growth of beech and oak; among which lives, in a fine old church that crowns the landscape, a Madonna especially revered by sailors, — who always in Catholic countries seem to entertain a high idea of a saint whose dwelling commands a wide look-out over their element.

My waning space will not permit me to attempt a description of the beauties of Passages. The connoisseur in scenery will understand from the few words I have said, that the elements of landscape must exist here in no common profusion. In truth, my recollections do not call to my mind a spot in any country where the natural beauties of water, wood, hill, and rock, are so happily and richly blended with the most picturesque creations of man. Old towers of fine rich yellow stone, grey forts, boats and shipping, tall balconied houses, long grey stairs zigzagging up the hill amid deep verdure, fishermen's nets hanging to dry on ivy and fern-grown quays, huge bay trees twisting their old stems between rocks and buildings, and overshadowing both with their

dark evergreen boughs,—these are among the dainties that Passages has to offer to the artist. One in love with his art would not get away from it in a month.

A boat across the bay and about two miles of road take you from Passages to St. Sebastian:—where the "Parador Isabel" is a good inn kept by kind people, who speak French. St. Sebastian is entirely a new town, and has little or nothing to interest the traveller. The walk round the hill on which the citadel is built commands a fine sea-view; and is rendered more interesting to Englishmen by the tombs of several British officers of the "Legion" which are situated at the back of the hill, within hearing of the surge that beats on the crags at its base.

LETTER XXII.

Azpeitia, June 12.

SOME time since I sent you an account of my pilgrimage to the birthplace and residence of Boccaccio. To-day I am going to tell you of my visit to the home of a spirit as different and antipathetic to his as it is possible perhaps for that of any human being to be; one who has filled earth with his name certainly no less than the kindly Florentine, and whose influence on the world has been—at least to the outward eye and to the ordinary observer of the course of human affairs—incalculably greater. Near the village of Azpeitia, on the bank of the clear and picturesque Urula, among the wooded hills and green valleys of Guipuzcoa, in the year 1491 was born Ignacio de Loyola. Being as we were at St. Sebastian, within a few leagues of such a spot, we could not be content to turn our backs upon it. So we determined on making a little tour of three or four days' duration through the moun-

tainous sub-Pyrenean province of Guipuzcoa, comprising the greater part of its bold and deeply indented coast; getting a peep at some of its pretty valleys and trout streams; and especially paying a visit to Loyola. Despite predictions of various obstacles in the way, of difficult roads and scant comforts, we have accomplished our trip thus far, sufficiently prosperously to justify me in recommending all who make the common excursion from Bayonne to St. Sebastian, to add thereto a similar supplement: making, however, one variation from the route which we followed, an improvement which I will indicate presently.

In starting from St. Sebastian the first difficulty that presented itself was the impossibility of procuring a side-saddle for my wife. There was nothing for it but to ride after the fashion of the women of the country,—seated high aloft, that is, on a large cushion placed on the top of the baggage, which is packed on an enormously high pack-saddle. The seat thus arranged is not an uneasy one. The feet hang down over the horse's neck; and as long as the lofty throne thus reared maintains its due position, there is little possibility of the rider falling from it. It is rather nervous work, however, for a beginner; especially over paths so steep and rugged as to be called by the peasants "escaleras de giedra" —stone staircases. For my own part, I preferred walking; although eight Spanish leagues—some

five and twenty miles—under a Spanish sun in June, and over those same "escaleras," is no slight day's work. So, at 4 A.M. we sallied forth from the gates of St. Sebastian: our guide, Santiago—an old fellow of sixty-five, as active as a boy, who told us a good deal of his having acted as muleteer to General Evans—leading our stout nag by a long cord, and I keeping an eye on the towering fabric on his back, which swayed, I thought, rather ominously.

Our quarters for the first night were to be at Deba—or Deva; for most of the names in which a *b* or *v* occur are written either way, and pronounced by a sound something between the two. This is a little seaport town on the Bay of Biscay,—not far from the boundary line of the two provinces, Guipuzcoa and Viscaya. Shortly after leaving the town the "escaleras" begin; and pretty nearly the whole day's journey is a succession of more or less steep climbing up and down. The country is pretty, but not deserving of any higher term of commendation. Oak, beech, ilex and chestnut combined, give to some of the valleys a character of rich sylvan scenery which in its way can hardly be surpassed. Old Santiago was eager to point out to us that when the Castilles were all white or brown, Guipuzcoa was still as green as ever.

Our route took us through three or four little hill towns,—queer isolated habitations, in a state

of most picturesque dilapidation, made up of the strangest medley of beggary and ruin mixed side by side with the remains of former magnificence. Rickety, tumble-down houses, crammed with human beings, stood in narrow steep streets, leaning here and there against the stalwart stone carcass of some fine mansion of an older day, empty of everything save the ivy bushes and the owls; yet still asserting, probably, its beggared aristocracy by a huge and elaborately carved stone scutcheon on its doorless and windowless façade. The number of buildings in this condition — the admirably solid masonry of the walls, looking as good as new, yet wholly abandoned and gutted—which we have seen in the course of our short Spanish travels, furnishes a striking commentary on the recent history of Spain.

At one of these little towns on the coast, and therefore somewhat less inaccessible than others, we stopped to dine and to rest during the hours of mid-day heat. Here our patriotic guide, piqued by our observations on the abundance of ruins, insisted on showing me the interior of an inhabited gentleman's mansion. Despite my remonstrances against being guilty of what appeared to me a piece of impertinence, he *would* send a message to the lady of the house to ask leave to see it. An exceedingly respectable looking butler presently made his appearance, and

revenged himself on our indiscretion, if indeed he deemed it such, by most pertinaciously insisting on walking me through every room in the building,—literally upstairs, downstairs, and in my lady's chamber. The chased chatelaine must, I fear, have taken refuge in the cellar, for I did not see her, or anything else the least remarkable, except a glazed and framed list of "Indulgencias particulares" granted specially by different Popes to the members of the noble family to whom the mansion belonged. This was hung up in the little chapel. The most remarkable items which I can remember were, that the Marquesses of —— might always eat as much meat as they liked when meaner mortals are bound to fast; that the Marchesas might at any time enter the convents of St. Clair with four female friends; and that the members of the family might be absolved by their own ordinary confessor from all the special sins reserved for episcopal consideration, *except heresy*.

We reached the little town of Deva, prettily situated amid wooded hills at the mouth of a river, of the same name, tired enough and eager for the creature-comforts of bed and board. But grievous was the disappointment which awaited us, especially as to the first of these requirements. —The improvement on our *projet de voyage*, which I promised to suggest for the benefit of my successors, is, that they should avoid the dis-

comforts of a night at Deva, by getting to Cestona —our second night's quarters—the first night. There is a path across the hills by which this might be accomplished without lengthening the day's journey,—and, though Deva is pretty, its church a fine one, and its small cloister one of the most elegant little *bijoux* conceivable, it has not enough to repay an extra day of fatigue and a night of discomfort. But, that you may understand what kind and amount of discomfort is to be feared in a Spanish village inn, it is needful to specify more accurately that the sheets were clean and dry, and the room, by sleeping with the window open, sufficiently airy. The mattrasses also were tolerably clean. The rest of the bedclothes, however, and still more the bedsteads, and the close dark holes in which they were stowed away, were dreadful. We contented ourselves, therefore, with mattrasses and sheets;—and having lugged these out into the centre of the floor, carefully away from all contact with wainscot or walls, we passed the night undisturbed by visitors of any kind. As for the supper, it would not have satisfied a patron of Soyer's or even a frequenter of Dolly's:—but I sat down hungry, and rose satisfied and undisgusted. In fact, I have not met, in my hitherto limited experience of Spanish eating, with any of those horrors of which I had heard so much. The preparations of food are certainly wholly unlike

any that meet one elsewhere; and it is possible that a tolerably Ulyssean acquaintance with the dishes and sauces of many cooks may have taught me to be more tolerantly omnivorous than the generality of my countrymen. But certainly, when I compared my experiences of sundry Bloomsbury cruets with the flavour of fresh Spanish oil, such even as the poor pot-house at Deva afforded, I could not but suppose that many of those who complain so loudly of the *rancid* horrors of the Spanish cuisine have no just notion of the meaning of *rancidity*. The Spanish oil is not so good nor so well made as that of France or Italy, it is true; but the peculiar taste, which those who like it not may take perhaps for rancidity, is the flavour of the olive.

At the same time, it is fair to add, that many persons have assured me that Navarre and the three Basque provinces—Guipuzcoa, Alava, and Viscaya—present a far too favourable specimen of Spain to serve as a sample of the entire country. These privileged provinces are, it is stated, far more civilized than the rest of the Peninsula; and from what I have heard and seen of them, I should conceive that the race inhabiting them is endowed with a much larger share of the qualities which constitute the elements of civilization. I may state also, here, that I am much persuaded, from all I was able to gather by talking to people of various classes,

that these provinces rebelled, and fought so long and well, not so much for love of this or that prince or dynasty, as for the maintenance of their own very important privileges—privileges not merely political, as many fancy, but such as come home at once to every man's own hearth and pocket; as, for example, a free trade in salt and tobacco, which brings them to the consumer at less than a fifth of the cost which the rest of Spain pays for them, and immunity from the detested conscription.

The day following our arrival at Deva was Sunday; and we found it absolutely necessary, if we would avoid rendering ourselves objects of disagreeable attention and animadversion, to go to mass. Our old landlord absolutely drummed us out of the house at the hour of high mass. The Spanish women all squat upon the pavement during the service; and almost every one has one or two lighted tapers on the floor before her. Most had huge rolls of yellow wax taper wound round carved wooden frames about the size of a sheet of foolscap paper. Every one who had recently lost a relative had also a black cloth, as big as a hearth-rug, spread before them, with their tapers upon it. Most of them had also a sort of pasteboard screen, about a foot high, to protect their tapers from the wind. The general effect produced by the entire floor of the church, occupied with dark squatting figures, covered

with black veils and mantillas, and intermingled with the apparatus described — was something stranger than can well be conceived. Having once undertaken the adventure, we were of course obliged to go through with it *en règle;* and my wife accordingly, duly decked with a long black veil in lieu of a bonnet, had to squat with the other women. My part was easier; as the men sit about on benches in the side chapels, &c., and seem to pay little or no attention to the service beyond bending the knee at the moment of the elevation of the Host.

In the afternoon we proceeded, travelling as before, to the baths of Cestona, through a pretty country of wooded hills and green sheltered valleys. Within a mile or so of the village of Cestona we passed the extremely picturesque forge and foundry of Iraeta, situated on the pretty Urula. The civil and hospitable gentleman who manages the works told us, in very good English, that the metal produced was some of the best in the world, but at a cost fully 50 per cent. higher than that of English iron. The foremen of the works were all English. They told us we were the first countrymen they had seen for the last fifteen months.

The ferruginous baths of Cestona are much frequented by the Spanish; and there is accommodation for about one hundred and forty persons. None had yet arrived there when we

reached the place; but we found everything ready, and the accommodations, though simple, perfectly clean, good, and comfortable. The visitors are divided into three classes,—for the first of which the charge, everything included, is five francs a day. The whole establishment is the property of a very rich "*marques*" in the neighbourhood. And very rich he may well be, —for, moderate as is the charge for living, he sells his ferruginous hot spring at the enormous price of two francs a bath.

It is an easy morning ride or walk from Cestona to Azpeitia, along the sweet banks of the Urula. The Convent and Church of San Ignacio—the grand objects of our excursion—are situated in the rich alluvial vale of Loyola, about a mile or more beyond the town. The visitor may bespeak his bed at the comfortable *parador* at Azpeitia as he passes through to the convent, and return thither in the cool of the evening. From Azpeitia, an interesting little town, with several Moorish-looking old houses, once highly ornamented though now dilapidated — tit-bits invaluable to Proutists—there is a diligence every day to Tolosa, a wholly uninteresting town on the great Madrid road; and thence to St. Sebastian and Bayonne.

On nearing the convent, the visitor sees only the dome and really very fine and grandiose Corinthian portico of the church, with its grand

flights of steps, and on either side the enormous walls of the vast monastery,—an immense mass of building already partly ruinous. But inside the better preserved portion of this structure, the old family mansion of the house of Loyola is contained in its original condition. It is of brick, and is said to be of great antiquity. The marble walls of the monastery—built, as is the church, from the quarries in the neighbouring hill of Izarraitz—were raised around it without touching it; and thus incase it as a 'Holy of Holies.' The interior of the church is handsome, and most elaborately and unsparingly ornamented with inlaid marble-work and carving. The dome, instead of painting, is enriched with eight enormous carved escutcheons, with the *Saint's arms*, the royal arms, &c. All this, as well as the endless succession of stalls, cloisters, courts, corridors, staircases, throughout the huge monastery, *must* be seen,—for the old sacristan who shows the abandoned pile, will not let you off an atom of it. But the real sight of interest, which he knowingly keeps to the last, is the room at the top of the old house in which Ignacio was born, and in which he lay wounded on his return from the siege of Pampeluna. It is a long very low room, now turned into a strange but richly adorned chapel,—to be entered only with bated breath and every outward mark of the extremest reverence. After a profusion of genuflexions and

crossings at the threshold, our conductor stepped up to the altar, and lighted two candles on each side of a gilt and painted image of the saint. Then, he, old Santiago, and two or three others, who had taken the opportunity of visiting the shrine, fell on their knees and remained silent for some minutes. We judged it judicious to do the same. This ceremony performed, we were at liberty to look about us. The ceiling of the room has been profusely ornamented with carving, gilding, and painting. The huge old beams, which project so far below the low ceiling as to leave barely room to pass under them, have been incased in richly gilt carved work. But with these exceptions, and that of the erection of the altar at one end of the room, with the tester of the Saint's whilom bed for its canopy, the apartment remains unchanged.

Wearily must have passed the hours of pain in that low-browed chamber under the hot roof, as the wounded knight lay thinking that breaking limbs and cutting throats furnished after all but coarse, vulgar, and little potent means of ruling men. More wearily still must each long mile of the then almost trackless way from far Pampeluna in neighbouring Navarre have been traversed, each step a pang, as the mangled and helpless man was borne among the greenwood over the hill side, up each precipitous ascent and across each stony ford, till he reached his native

valley; where at least the well-known chamber in the tall old ancestral mansion turns its windows towards the neighbouring ocean, and receives the earliest evening breeze of freshness from the bay. But suffering is a great teacher, and fever a puissant kindler of the brain. Together they did their work on that imagination of fire and will of iron—with the result which we know.

The well-nigh total downfal of his order and its ill repute have in nowise damped the zealous ardour of the Saint's votaries in his native valley. Either he is no prophet,—or he is an exception to the rule that no man is a prophet in his own country. His image is supposed to be capable of working all sorts of wonders.

LETTER XXIII.

Saragossa.

It is hardly possible, I should imagine, to meet with a more striking and unmistakable lesson on the value of free institutions, even in their most stunted and modified form, than that presented to the traveller who passes from the Basque provinces and Navarre into Arragon. It is in truth one of those which he who runs may read. It may be, that some have marked causes and consequences in the world's history so little, or so amiss, as not to understand that the smiling and comparatively prosperous Basque peasant and the scowling Arragonese savage are as they are, and what they are, in consequence of the ancient and jealously guarded "fueros" of the one and the crushing despotism which has for so many ages blasted the other. But that such a difference exists, all must have observed who have seen the two districts. The green hills of "the provinces"—as the Basque country is called, *par*

excellence—once left behind us, and the arid plains and naked wastes of hungry Arragon once entered,—adieu to the upright jaunty gait and the stalwart elastic forms nourished on a daily mid-day ration of beans and bacon and a morning and evening meal of bread and milk, the usual fare of the Basque peasantry,—adieu to the courteous salutation, the gay holiday dances, and the merry sound of the village fife and drum,—adieu to the clean cookery and decent inns of the privileged corner of Spain! Instead of all this, we pass amid the gaunt forms of poverty, want and savagery, typified in the peculiarly repulsive features and manners of the Arragonese labourers,—and are met every moment by evidences of their low position in the scale of civilization.

Having returned to Bayonne from a first excursion into "the provinces,"—of which I sent you some account in a former letter,—we again started thence by a road recently opened, or at least recently rendered *carriageable*, to Pampeluna, the capital of Navarre. This route, far preferable to the old longer but much less hilly way by Tolosa, passes through the fertile valley of the Bastan, climbing two spurs of the Pyrenees,—first the Maia chain to get into the valley, and then that of Relate to get out of it. All this district, especially that of the Relate chain, is very pretty; chiefly owing to the magnificent beech and oak woods, and the mixture of grey

cliffs and crags here and there peering out from among them. As Pampeluna is neared, the country becomes less interesting; and the immediate neighbourhood of the city is ugly,—low rolling hills, brown and partly barren. The town itself is a clean, well built, inhabitable little city,—far more characteristically Spanish than St. Sebastian, — with an extremely pretty "alameda" (*i. e.* promenade) called "La Taconera," and a comfortable and clean little inn on the fine Plaza del Castillo. Cheap and well supplied also it must be,—since one may live well on all the fat of the land in the best room of the hotel for four francs a-day, everything included. The Cathedral is small; and more remarkable, to those familiar with the rest of Europe and newly arrived in Spain, for the peculiarities of its arrangement and the practices of its worshippers than for anything else. A leading feature in Spanish churches is always the "retablo,"—a huge erection of carving, gilding, and painting in wood or stone, rising immediately behind the high altar, generally to the height of the roof. This "retablo" is often very handsome in its way; but to those acquainted with the fine churches of the North of Europe, it must ever appear a miserable substitute for the beautiful east window or windows which it supersedes. The *Lady-chapel*, together with the range of chapels circling behind the high

altar, which form so exquisitely beautiful a feature in many of our cathedrals, is almost always wanting in the north of Spain;—possibly because the entire church is but a *Lady-chapel* in this land of ultra-Mariolatry. Thus the "retablo" generally forms the eastern extremity of the building. The inclosed choir is often an eye-sore in our churches: it is yet more so in those of Spain. Placed generally farther from the altar, it is often near the west end of the nave; and consists of a solidly walled inclosure, which blocks up and embarrasses the perspective of the church sadly. It is shut in at the eastern end by an iron railing—"reja"—often magnificently worked, with a gate in the middle opposite to the altar. From this gate to the altar, often a distance of more than a third of the entire church, a passage inclosed by a double railing some four feet high leads. This passage, thus partitioned off and secured from the laity, serves for the constant processional marching to and fro, from the choir to the altar, of the officiating clergy. On either side of this railed passage is the favourite place for the females of the congregation, and it is usually floored to accommodate their habit of squatting on the ground during the service. And next, at Pampeluna may be observed that genuine pagan practice which has descended unadulterated from ante-Christian times, together with so many other less palpably

undisguised remnants of the old religion of the country,—the custom of offering loaves or meal to the manes of deceased relatives, for the purpose of getting them, as it is *now* phrased, out of purgatory. Meantime, these offerings more obviously help to keep the officiating priest therefrom: for he sends a chorister round with a sack to collect them all, at a certain part of the service, and they are carried off—to be seen no more by profane eyes. Most of the fair mourners, who placed these offerings before them as they squatted on the floor, brought with them also four huge red wax candles, with a like number of brass candlesticks, which they lighted and arranged symmetrically before them on black rugs, also brought to church with them. All this apparatus filled large baskets, which the worshippers as they arrived, having looked around and chosen their ground—an unoccupied space, that is, large enough for their purpose—proceeded to unpack most methodically, twitching a corner here and a corner there, till the rug was spread to their liking, arranging and re-arranging their offerings and their candles, and often rising, after they had completed their preparations and knelt down, to retouch some article which seemed not set out to the best advantage.

On quitting the church, I was no little amused at a placard affixed to the door, containing a most characteristically Spanish bookseller's puff,

of a kind wholly unknown, *mirabile dictu!* to Paternoster Row. After duly advertising the title and price of a History of a certain image of the Virgin, and of the miracles which it performed, the publisher stated, that by the Bishop's authority he was enabled to promise forty days' indulgence for each of the eighty sections composing the work, to all purchasers who should devoutly read the same!

The road from Pampeluna to Tudela, a town situated on the Ebro, and on the borders of the province of Arragon, is wholly uninteresting. The first part lies through a country covered previously to the war of independence with ilex woods, but now naked. The latter half passes through some of the most miserable country it was ever my lot to look on. Wide tracts of utterly naked reddish brown gravel, and deserts covered with thinly sprinkled tufts of coarse parched couch, constituted a great part of it. In this district—which when we passed over it had not seen rain for eight months—water is fertility, food and wealth, and the want of it utter barrenness, distress and starvation. Wherever there are the means of irrigation, and sufficient industry and skill to turn them to account, the soil brings forth abundantly.

The traveller may, if he please, proceed by diligence in about thirty hours from Pampeluna to Saragossa. But it is better, if he be not too

much alarmed at the prospect of a bug-haunted bed at Tudela, to quit the coach there, and to proceed the next or some following morning to Saragossa, by the boat which plies on the "Imperial Canal" between that city and Tudela. He will start at 4 A.M., and arrive about 2 P.M. at his destination.

Undeterred by broiling heat by day and little rest by night, we remained three days before proceeding to Saragossa, for the sake of visiting the little known and curious old city of Tarazona, situated some twelve miles to the south of Tudela. It is a city of about twelve thousand souls, accessible only by roads scarcely to be traversed by other wheels than those of a cart. A huge kind of ponderous gig, consisting of a high canopied seat, which had been gaudy in some former century with scarlet velvet and yellow silk, and which we conjectured to have whilom formed the throne of some Moorish king perhaps, raised on two enormous wheels and lashed behind a tall vigorous mule, did, it is true—the driver walking or running by the side the while—convey us thither, with no other mishap than a few bruises and sore bones, in four hours. Once there, the recollection of the past four hours of misery, and of the other four to be encountered on our return, were forgotten in the excitement and interest of gazing about us. The day of our arrival chanced to be that of St. Albert, the

patron of the labourers in this part of the world; and we were just in time to see the procession in his honour coming from the Cathedral. The grave authorities, in ancient red velvet gowns and bearing huge gilt maces, went first; and then a crowd of peasants all in their best, dancing, screaming, and whirling sticks in a manner much calculated to remind one of an Indian war dance. The position of the decaying old brick town on a precipitous bluff, washed at its base by the river Queyles, is exceedingly picturesque. The ruins of the Moorish *alcazar* occupy the summit; but the more modern though very ancient bishop's palace, a strange irregular mass of grey brick, highly ornamented, with medallion heads and arabesque looking brickwork, is the most prominent object in the view of the town. The Cathedral, though strongly marked in many portions of the building by Moorish characteristics, is for the most part Gothic; and belongs to that rich period when the abundance of wealth poured into Spain from the recently discovered treasures of the New World, encouraged the most lavish expenditure of labour in ornament and finish. Countless sums were more especially bestowed on ecclesiastical edifices; covering the solid walls with the most exquisite lacework of sculptured stone,—often probably in the hope that such an employment of part of the wealth acquired beyond the seas by means that irked the

owner's conscience, might buy off the punishment which the sinner himself deemed his righteous due. The small Cathedral of Tarazona is a curious specimen of this reckless expenditure of wealth and labour. Sculptured frieze and fretted pinnacle, delicately turned arch and exquisitely chiselled column, have been multiplied as if for the purpose of expending as much labour as possible on a given space. The result is, a whole, strange, quaint, and irregular in the extreme,—but rich in picturesque bits and artistic effects of light and shade almost beyond any building I ever saw; unless it be, indeed, St. Mark's at Venice,—of which, I hardly know why, this queer old church at once reminded both me and my companion.

On our return to Tudela in the evening, the scene at our host's supper table was a most amusing and intensely Spanish one. The guests were in number about four and twenty, including two ladies, the mother and sister of an officer in the army, who was travelling with them. More than one fat Navarrese farmer there, might have represented Sancho Panza to the life; while the officer just mentioned was quite rueful of countenance enough, only rather too short, to have personified the immortal Knight. No two things, so nearly the same, can differ so much as a *table d'hôte* in France, and one—especially at a small town, as here—in Spain. If the principal

matter in a dinner be the food placed before you, the French affair is very much superior. But if regard be had to the society, the Spanish table is entitled to as decided a preference. Not that even in that respect the outward appearance is in favour of Spain. A far more unbroken array of "decent" coats and of irreproachable hats—duly exhibited on the heads of their respective proprietors—will be found at the French table. Many a light jacket, many an unkerchiefed throat, and very possibly, below the salt, more than one pair of shirt-sleeves, may be seen at a Spanish inn supper. But no gross-feeding bagman bolting a hurried meal will snatch the dish from which you are about to help yourself. There will be no danger of hearing conversation calculated to make a modest woman blush or an honest man indignant. Nor will a foreigner have to swallow a silent meal, while all are talking around him on topics in which he can take no interest. A stranger at a Spanish table will probably find the company all vying with each other, like so many courteous hosts, in endeavouring to do the honours of the country to him. More especially if a lady be in the case will the most respectful attention be paid. Among themselves, it seems as if strangers who never saw each other before make acquaintance, and set themselves on easy terms of familiar joking and bantering much more easily and quickly than

their neighbours north of the Pyrenees. And if, for the good fortune of the foreigner, there chance to be an Andalusian present, he is sure in five minutes to be the joke-master general to the whole company. If, however, a grave *retenue* or moderated voice be deemed essential to decorum and respectability, the visitor must not hope for it at such a table as I am describing. Every one screams his joke across the table, and laughs his laugh without stint. The host presses you to fill your glass,—and permits himself a jesting admonition to a water-drinking lady, whom he adjures to forswear all thin potations.

It was towards the end of such a supper at Tudela, when the fruit and liqueurs had been put upon the table and most of the *convives* had produced their "cigarillos," that an incident occurred calculated to complete the character of the scene in such a manner that nothing might be wanting to our specimen of Spanish life. Suddenly, amid the chaos of tongues, a man entered;—the host rose, and yielded to him his seat at table, and there was a cry of—"Silence for the *Administrador!*" This gentleman was nothing else than the coach-office director, who had come to make a communication to the company. All the chattering ceased immediately; and then it was announced with all beseeming gravity, that notice had been received of the fact that a band of twelve or fourteen brigands

were lurking on the hills between Tudela and Pampeluna,—and that there was every reason to suppose they would attack the coach, which was to start for the latter town at eleven that night! The faces of a good many at table became somewhat longer at this news; as the majority of those at supper were about to travel with the diligence to Pampeluna, and probably with full purses,—for it was just before the Pampeluna fair. The director then announced, that he had four "guardias civiles" at his disposition; and that he proposed separating the passengers from the baggage, and sending the latter in a second coach with the guards. This to me appeared a most senseless plan,—dividing the force, and for no very intelligible purpose. So thought a few of the passengers:—and a lively debate ensued. The majority, however, were in favour of the director's plan; which was eventually adopted,—with what ultimate result I know not. The fact, however, of a band of robbers being in the country between Pampeluna and Tudela was certain enough; for they had been surprised by the civil force a short time before in a mill,—upon which occasion two of the gang had been captured. One of the "guardias civiles" was killed in the encounter by one of the men taken:—and the murderer had been executed for the crime at Tudela a couple of days before we arrived there.

All this was "exceedingly gratifying—naturally so," as being Spanish, characteristic—and so forth; but we were not sorry that the banditti were known to be in the country through which we had passed, instead of in that which we were about to traverse. We departed by the canal boat at four the next morning—and as my letter is already fully long enough, I must defer anything I may have to say about Saragossa to another occasion,—contenting myself for the present with the fact, that we arrived there in due course, after traversing a detestably ugly country, through which the canal runs, without let or hindrance of any kind.

LETTER XXIV.

Saragossa.

I PROMISED in my last letter to give you my "impressions de voyage" at Saragossa. It will not require much time or space to do so; for, in truth, Saragossa, notwithstanding its "name in story," is by no means an interesting town. It is probable, however, that many would sympathize with the feeling of interest and curiosity which induced me to traverse so many leagues of the burnt, dreary plains of Arragon, to visit its storied capital. It was not precisely that I expected, on arriving at Saragossa, to see "the Maid" of that ilk standing on the wall, in a picturesque Roman costume, as unlike that of her own country as possible,—although it has pleased certain imaginative brethren of the brush, no doubt for some very good reason, so to represent her. It was not exactly this; but "Segnius irritant animum," &c.: you know the rest. And I certainly did wish much to *see* the city where

"war to the knife" had been so waged against the invader as to have cost the lives of 60,000 patriot Spaniards,—a legend which the general history of the war might seem to render almost as incredible as that of the 11,000 virgins. So, however, it stands written; nor is there any doubt that the account is a just one. Traces, indeed, of War's work are by no means wanting; and if all that poets and painters have filled our imaginations withal be not still manifest here to the bodily sense, there are visible and tangible marks enough to satisfy the most cautious craver for the palpable.

On reaching the city by the white, dusty poplar avenue which traverses the league (or thereabouts) that lies between it and the canal from Tudela, you enter by the side arch of a new red-brick gateway, intended to be grandiose and magnificent, but, in truth, hideously ugly, stunted, and poverty-stricken. It is a mere brick wall, raw-looking and unfinished, with five archways in it. The exterior passage on either side is appropriated to carriages. The other three open on a wide, shadeless, glaring gravel walk—the "alameda" of the Saragossans, who throng thither in crowds every evening to saunter up and down, exhibit their best mantillas, and endeavour to find a breath of cooler air than that which has been suffocating them all day; for Saragossa is one of the many Spanish cities

which share with Madrid the disadvantage of being extremely cold in winter, and overpoweringly hot in summer. On the right hand, as the city is entered by this uninviting gate, stand the ruins of the once rich and beautiful Convent of Santa Engracia,—the first evidence of the destroyer's presence. These passed, the road proceeds by the side of the cheerless "alameda" for some quarter of a mile between it and a range of newly-built plaster-seeming houses, which look as if they had been transported from Belleville, or some such locality, till both fall together into the "Coso,"—the main street of Saragossa. It is at this spot that the stranger's disappointment will be at its height. At the point of junction, there is a bran-new fountain, surmounted by a lumpy, stunted Neptune, which contrasts sadly enough with the traveller's recollection of John of Bologna's masterpiece in his native city; while the reminiscence thus unfortunately evoked, leads to an equally unfavourable comparison between the mean, whity-brown characterless street before us, and the picturesque architecture which renders each street in every even second-rate city of Italy an eloquent commentary on its history.

It is not strictly just, however, to say that the Coso of Saragossa is altogether without character: it has that of dilapidation and poverty. And it must not be forgotten, that the disfiguring ves-

tiges of the invader, which impart to it this appearance, are, in the eyes of its inhabitants, its most precious ornament and proudest distinction. Most justly are the Saragossans entitled so to consider the shotmarks, which to the present day deface most of the façades in their principal street. But the ruin effected by the violence of man, unlike that due to the hand of time, is generally ugly to the eye and disagreeable to the mind. The city would be greatly improved in appearance if the citizens would be content to intrust the record of their noble struggle in defence of their homes to the page of history, and would condescend to efface the ragged brown bullet-marks which make the white plaster fronts of the houses look as though they were just recovering from a sort of architectural small-pox. So far are they, however, from having any thought of doing this, that many persons have specially directed in their wills that the scarred walls of the houses which they bequeathed should be suffered to continue *in statu quo*.

One of the houses most honourably distinguished by these scars was the "Fonda de Europa," in which we found quarters. We had been recommended thither by the captain of the canal boat; who, after naming some other hotels, which he said were good, mentioned this,—a newly-established house, he said, at which the prices, indeed, were very high — as much as

twenty reals (five francs) a day, but where there was "great luxury"—"mucho luxo; muchissimo luxo." In other countries, I am not, I think, a very luxurious person; but I had seen enough of Spanish inns to make me desirous of trying how far five francs' worth of Spanish luxury would go towards a tolerable amount of English decency. I am constrained to admit that the approximation was only infinitesimal. A traveller's grumblings at bad inns are rarely worth registering; but, really, the species of accommodation provided in the best room of the best inn in a city of some 65,000 inhabitants, struck me as too curiously illustrative of the state of things in Spain to be passed over in silence. A wretched flock mattrass of the vilest description, placed on an indescribably filthy palliasse, was the best bed afforded by this abode of luxury. The *cuisine* was a bad attempt at an imitation of that of France. But this department is comparatively unimportant. It is not the board, but the bed accommodation in general, which makes travelling in Spain an undertaking of so much difficulty. None but those who have experienced it can know what it is after a day of fatigue and heat,—sitting, for example, twelve hours on a Spanish mule, with a Spanish saddle, under a Spanish July sun,—to toss sleeplessly all night, tormented into fever by the inevitable attacks of vermin. Any amount, almost, of

fatigue and discomfort may be endured during the day with a fair portion of health and good humour, if it is to be followed by a night of rest. But without this it is really a bad business.

Saragossa has two sights to regale the lionizing tourist withal; and little, if anything, besides. These are its two cathedrals; both worth seeing in their different ways, and as strangely dissimilar as it is well possible to conceive two edifices built for the same purpose to be. "El Pilar"—the title of one of these churches—is an enormous brick edifice raised to the Virgin, over the spot on which she is recorded to have descended bodily from heaven on a *pillar*. The building is in the taste of the latter part of the seventeenth century, and is superlatively hideous. The interior, though in some degree striking, from its vast size, is little better. It is a world of Roman arches and cupolas, all bedaubed with paintings and yellow wash. In the midst of the centre aisle is inclosed and covered beneath an interior cupola, the pillar on which the Virgin descended; and this spot is the favourite object of worship at Saragossa, and of pilgrimage throughout Arragon. It is thronged daily by a crowd of worshippers, eagerly awaiting their turn to kiss a portion of the original pillar left visible through a hole in its stone casing, some six or eight inches in diameter. The carved woodwork of the choir

is good, and the "retablo" of the high altar is one of the most extraordinary works in the world. It is an enormous mass of alabaster carving, covering some 2500 square feet of surface, or thereabouts. The general effect of this masterpiece of skill and labour is exceedingly rich and grand; but even if the position and the light were such as to render a detailed examination of the figures possible, the infinite multiplication of them, and the vast variety of subjects, would necessarily cause it to be regarded rather as a magnificent architectural decoration than as a creation of high Art. The diamonds and various "orfèvrerie" *belonging to the Virgin*, and kept in the sacristy, are worth seeing. There are amongst them the finest pearls and some of the finest diamonds I ever saw. But the greater part of the wealth accumulated here was pillaged by the French. I was sufficiently *maladroit* to ask the old priest who showed us the remaining treasures, by what means they had been preserved when the church was pillaged by the French. He replied, with a good deal of dignity, that the Virgin had not been, and could not be, *pillaged*,—that she was abundantly able to protect herself; but that the chapter had indeed made a *large present* to the French generals.

The other and older cathedral, termed the "Seu," which seems to be a corruption of

"Sedes," has been almost as much disfigured, as to the exterior, by modern embellishments, as its neighbour, El Pilar. But within it is, in truth, a grand and magnificent church. At the first glance, I felt that I was repaid for the labour and time it had cost me to reach Saragossa. One of the peculiarities of Spanish churches is, that the aisles are generally of the same height as the nave. I am not sure that this is always an advantage. Where the length of the church and the number of arches are not very great, the result is, that the distinctive character of a church is lost in that of a huge quadrangular room. But at the Seu, the effect of the five aisles, or more properly of the nave and its two aisles on either side, all of the same height, or nearly so, is excessively striking and grand. The entire building, with the exception of such subordinate portions as the inclosure of the choir and the side chapels, which are exclusive of the five aisles, is of the best period of Gothic. The colour is a lovely rich stone grey. One feature of beauty which the eye looks for, in a first-class Gothic church, is wanting—that of fine windows. Many an architectural student, conversant with the beauties of our northern churches, will be apt to doubt the possibility of a satisfactory Gothic building, without this leading feature. But let him suspend his judgment on this point till

he has seen the Seu. There the only light admitted is by very small, round, unornamental windows, opened close under the roof, in the highest part of each arch of the external aisle, and in a similar position at the west end of each. Moreover, as soon as ever the sunbeams strike any one of these, they are forthwith excluded from the building, by the drawing of a thick dark-brown curtain. The result of this is, that a "dim religious light," sombre, mysterious, and exciting to the imagination, prevails at all times within the vast edifice. The effect thus produced is the greater, from the intense contrast it presents to the glaring, blazing sunlight which the visitor has just left on the outside. When he steps from the heat, the noise, the blinding excess of light, and the fervid air teeming with life—when the heavy swing-door closes behind him, and sends its rumbling echoes roaming far away amid pillar and arch, around the huge church—the eye, disabled by the sudden change, barely descries dim ghosts of columns, fading away, in fainter and fainter perspective, behind each other, till they are lost in utter obscurity, and a fresh cool air comes up from the unseen recesses of the building, which completes the effect of transition into a wholly different world. Gradually the eye becomes accustomed to the twilight, and one after the other huge forms of sculptured saints and

distant altars loom up out of the deep obscurity; till by slow degrees the stranger becomes at last cognizant of the entire extent and plan of the noble fabric, and sensible of the various exquisite effects of chiar-oscuro which to an artist must render the Seu of Saragossa one of the most admirable cathedrals in Europe. No small number of the hours which I passed in Saragossa were spent within the walls of the Seu; and that not only because many hours are needed to examine the infinite wealth of sculpture, carving, and architectural ornament it contains, but because it was the only tolerably cool spot in Saragossa. Even the natives were groaning under the oppression of the intense heat when we were there. The very "*arrieros*" said, that it was impossible to face the heat of the day;—and with the exception of the burning and blistering rays of the sun, the nights were almost as oppressive. During all this intense heat, the sombre interior of the Seu was always the same,—always as cool as if no raging southern sun were vainly pouring its whole force on its enormous roof and massive walls. Generally, during several hours of the day, after the canons had said their perfunctory morning service, and scuttled off to more congenial occupations as quickly as might be, the vast area of the church was as much ours to sit or to walk in as our own drawing-room could have been. For the tide of devotees sets always

strongly towards the more favourite El Pilar. Now and then some ancient dame would stray into the church; and creeping, pigmy-like, at the feet of those colossal columns, would make her way to the shrine of her particular pet saint, and there go through a duly measured quantum of recitation. In the evening, more particularly, we often saw a mother and daughter come forth, "*para tomare el fresco*," to find a breath of air, and to seek, Spanish-wise, the sole dissipation of their day, in a visit to the church. There, before some favourite altar—that of Pedro Arbues, perhaps, or that at which a wooden crucifix is recorded to have spoken to an ancient canon of the church, who now kneels in marble at its foot—the characteristic pair would kneel or sit couched, Indian-like, on the pavement; turning and opening and shutting their fans with that rapidity of motion and facility of evolution peculiar to a Spanish woman, and emitting a sort of whistling noise, the production of which is in the eyes of every Spanish dame an essential and important part of a fan's duty.

This tomb and shrine of Peter Arbues—who is no *Saint*, as called by Mr. Ford in Mr. Murray's "Guide-book," but only a "Beatus"—recals one of the most remarkable passages in the past history of the cathedral, and a circumstance which struck me as one of the most curious in its present practice. Before the altar of

one of the chapels, on the south side of the church near the east end, Pedro Arbues, a Dominican monk and Grand Inquisitor, was murdered in 1495, by Vidal Duranso, whose hand thus executed the general will of the overgoaded hatred and indignation of the city. But a death so like Becket's has not yet been followed by similar promotion;—and this apparently only for want of cash to pay the fees; for so only can I understand the pressing application made in a placard placed in front of the altar in question, for alms towards the canonization of Peter Arbues. I fear he is likely to wait yet a long time, if no Pope can be prevailed upon to let him into the calendar gratis; for in his own city all the cash of the devout goes to the rival establishment over the way at El Pilar. Nor are the profits of the Virgin's *well authenticated* descent here, and innumerable miracles since, confined to the priests and the interior of the church. At Saragossa, as at Ephesus formerly, the silversmiths profit largely by the established superstition, and would doubtless be found amongst the most eager champions of the orthodox idolatry. A whole street full of them, called after their trade the "Plateria," exist almost entirely by manufacturing thousands of silver virgins on pillars, which the faithful purchase as Penates. Rarely does a Spanish woman pass by Saragossa without carrying away with her one of these idols, larger or

smaller according to her means. Some are less than an inch in height, others as much as six.

Saragossa has little else worthy of notice. Its long bridge over the Ebro, which the Arragonese are wont, in their ignorance of aught better, to deem a marvel, never could have had any pretensions to beauty in its best day—and is now in a semi-ruinous condition. The great pea-soup-coloured stream running between its dull tame banks of similar hue, has no feature of beauty or interest.

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large profits he was drawing from the mines intrusted by a Spanish company to his care. How much reason they have for their hatred may be judged from the fact, that the shares of this company were selling before he took the management of it for one hundred dollars, whereas they are now worth above a thousand! In fact, the mines, from being a ruinous affair, have by active and intelligent management become a most prosperous one; and the shareholders are all making their fortunes. Yet, their indispensable manager, without whom, no doubt, the concern would soon go to the same ruin from which he extricated it, goes about in danger of his life, because Spanish patriotism cannot endure to see a foreigner reap his share of that harvest from Spanish soil, which Spaniards could not gather without him.

The other difficulties and disagreeables of the journey could hardly be exaggerated. To an old traveller of the rougher gender, these things are of course rather matter of amusement than of distress. To ladies, however, the expedition is in truth a formidable one;—and for invalids it might well be deemed, one would think, a desperate attempt. Yet many struggle through it, attracted by the marvellous accounts current of the cures effected by the waters of Panticosa;—to which place we are now *en route*.

We left Saragossa for Huesca at 3 A.M. in a

ramshackle sort of old omnibus dragged by eight mules. Six of the company, including ourselves, were bound for Panticosa. These consisted of a *littérateur* of Madrid, a gentlemanlike agreeable man enough, but a confirmed hypochondriac,—who was dragging a young and very pretty wife to this Ultima Thule of Spanish notions, in the hope of finding there a cure for the various ills which existed only in his own diseased imagination. She was an Andalusian, full of vivacity and good humour, with a laugh ready for every *contretemps* and a jest for each fresh difficulty. She had been educated in Paris; and was therefore far more alive to all the deficiencies and annoyances which the nurselings of civilization are exposed to, when they venture into a land of comparative barbarism, than the generality of untravelled Spanish women would have been Notwithstanding this, she bore with unbroken cheerfulness an amount of fatigue and discomfort which I thought nothing but English pluck and stamina could have enabled my wife to surmount. Our other fellow-travellers were, a Saragossan far gone in a decline, and his wife,—and four or five others as far only as Huesca. Among them was the "Alcalde"—mayor—of that very ancient seat of the Arragonese University. He took upon him to furnish amusement during the eight hours of our journey, by a succession of funning;—now asking a young girl opposite to

him how old she thought him, and when she guessed (somewhat maliciously) seventy, threatening to commit her to prison as soon as we reached Huesca, for calumniating the mayor by adding ten years to his age,—now producing from all sorts of pockets and stowing-places vast stores of provisions, and distributing them among the company with the most comic entreaties to eat. By sheer importunity he at last succeeded in disposing of most of his stock.

Huesca is the *ne plus ultra* of wheel-communication. In truth, several times before arriving there, we were inclined to pronounce the attempt to push it thus far a Quixotic undertaking. The road is one of nature's own making for the greater part of the distance—"el camino real de las pernices"—a highroad of the partridges, as the Spaniards say; and our huge coach rocked like a boat in a heavy sea. The country between Saragossa and Huesca—brown, open, parched, and not half cultivated for want of inhabitants—is as wholly devoid of interest as it is possible to conceive. At the end of eight long hours—long, despite the worthy alcalde's *facetiæ*—we reached the ancient and learned, but ugly and uninteresting, town of Huesca,—and essayed to find quarters in the one posada of the place. Those shown us by a surly ill-looking hostess were pronounced by our charming Andalusian friend—whose untiring kindness made her a veritable guardian

angel to us during this rough journey—to be *too* bad, too filthy to be tolerable. We were not yet broken in to the by-ways of Spanish travelling. So, she set off in search of lodgings in some private house for us as well as for herself and her husband; and by the help of the "gefe politico," an officer answering to the French *préfet*—to whom they had letters of introduction—at last found some. We were but too glad to get our heads under any shelter; and the people of the cottage which received us were at least kind and anxious to oblige. But that night the calamities of the journey began. Our friends had one small, low room—thermometer above ninety—and we another. They might have had both but for their charity to us. One half-hour's trial of our bed was sufficient to convince us that no rest was to be had there. Thousands of sleep-destroyers, quite as potent in that way as Macbeth, drove us to the comparative tranquillity of a chair by the open window. But a night thus spent was a bad preparation for the morrow's fatigue. Our mules were to be at the door at three A.M.,—for it was desirable to get as large a portion as possible of work done before the hot hours of the day. The next resting-place in our route was this town,—a little mountain city, accessible only by mountain paths. But to reach this required twenty hours; so that a night halt by the way became indispensable. Well, after

some difficulty in getting the ladies established in their "silletas," we got under way: six saddle mules, two baggage ditto, four "arrieros," and one donkey, forming a long procession "in Indian file," as they say in America—nose to tail, that is — and very difficult it is to make an old Spanish mule depart from this his accustomed order of march. The "silleta" is an instrument of torture substituted in this part of the world for a side-saddle; resembling in its construction two of the machines termed "rough riders," placed on the mule's back some twenty inches apart, while a couple of pillows are laid in the angles of them, and on the ridge of the Spanish pack-saddle which occupies the space between them. The short jerking pace of an "arriero's" over-working mule, acting on the person of a rider sitting sideways in the machine described, without the slightest possibility of steadying herself, or accommodating her movement to that of the beast, by means of the ill-arranged little foot-board which supplies the place of a stirrup, is sure at the end of an hour's ride to produce a sensation as if the body were broken in half across the loins. As for the gentlemen, their equipment consisted in a rope tied round their steed's nose, and some three or four horse-cloths and sheep-skins girded on his back.

Thus we rode our first stage of seven hours: arriving for our mid-day halt at a little hill vil-

lage, called Sarsa, about eleven A.M. During the last three hours the heat had been intense,—the route bare, arid, shadeless, and ugly. The ladies were dreadfully fatigued, and none of the party much in love with Spanish mule travelling. Our first demand was water, our second mattrasses. We ordered our food—eggs and bacon—to be ready at three P.M., and lay down on our backs, to get what rest the heat would let us during the intervening hours. We were at least not disturbed by noise; for no one in the village dreamed of stirring during the mid-day heat. The arrieros lay down by the side of their beasts in the stable:—and all was as quiet as the grave.

Having discussed our eggs and bacon, we were again in our saddles—saddles, quotha!—on our beasts' backs at least—by four P.M., with five more hours' work to do, to bring us to our quarters for the night. This stage was, however, not so trying as that of the morning. The road entered the mountains, and began to be both less exposed to the blaze of the sun and more interesting. Natheless, none were sorry when, a little after nine, we entered, *ordine longo*, the wretchedly paved little village street of Anzanigo:—such was the name of our halting-place. From nine P.M. till three A.M. is a short allowance for supper and bed, after twelve hours in the saddle,—yet we found it quite long enough for our stay

at Anzanigo. While the supper was preparing, I strolled out into the street, and observed in several instances the entire inhabitants of a house taking their rest stretched on the pavement of the street before their doors. The village street, with its family groups thus slumbering in the moonlight, and the varied effects of its light and shade on them and on the broken outline of the buildings, would have formed no bad study for an artist. I could not but feel that they had most judiciously chosen their place of rest; and the thought of the oven-like, low-roofed, filthy den in which I was to pass the night made me much inclined to follow their example.

Once more, at three A.M., we hoisted our sore and aching limbs into the vile substitutes for saddles, and set forth on our eight hours' ride to Jaca. The country through which we passed, though by no means of first-rate beauty, was not altogether uninteresting. The verdure and variety of the mountains were an infinite delight and relief after so many days' journeying over the detestable plains of Arragon. The principal object in the landscape during the day was the fine, fir clothed peak of Oroel,—which rises to a very considerable height immediately over Jaca to the south-east. As we were coming from precisely this point of the compass, this imposing mass was exactly between us and the city during

the whole of our ride,—and the last part of it was occupied in winding round its base. Towards the town it presents a huge red cliff, the various shades on which, and the contrast of those on the pine woods which crown and skirt it, make a very picturesque background to the view of the city, looking southwards.

It was about half-past eleven when our weary *cortège* entered the gate of Jaca:—a nearly square compact little city, still comfortably contained within its ancient walls. A citadel, almost if not quite as large as the city itself, forms a separate enclosure about a stone's throw to the north; and about a mile behind that rises the main chain of the Pyrenees, with the valley of the Canfranc—through which some five or six hours of mountain mule-path takes you into France—opening between its peaks to give exit to the river Arragon. Again to-day the last three hours of our journey were the most killing part of the day's work; and I am persuaded that we should have done better to have travelled wholly by night.

Jaca, notwithstanding its high antiquity and early importance in the history of medieval Arragonese liberty—for liberty had one of her strongholds amid these mountains some eight centuries ago—Jaca now-a-days has little or nothing to interest a stranger. Our Spanish friends, indeed, seem to take a lively interest in the fact

that the body of one Santa Orosia is in the keeping of the Cathedral chapter here. But the saint's name was new to me; and I confess to having felt far more keenly interested by the inspection of our quarters in the "Posado" of Don Jose Vendras. This Jaca hostelrie is one degree, and but one degree, better than that at Huesca. The people, however, are civil instead of sulky:—which to one's comfort, moral at least if not physical, is a great point. So we have determined to remain three nights beneath their roof, to recruit.

LETTER XXVI.

Panticosa.

I MUST send you a letter from these remote and strangely-situated Spanish baths, were it only to invite the further inquiries of your medical friends to the extraordinary accounts current here of their wonderful efficacy,—especially in cases of *far-gone* consumption. If half that is related, not by interested parties, but by patients and ex-patients, of the cures performed here be true, the virtues of these waters ought to be far more widely known than they are. At Jaca, a gentleman was pointed out to me who had been carried to Panticosa so far gone in consumption that on his arrival there no time was lost in administering to him the last sacraments of the Roman church. Seven years had elapsed since then; and he is now, to all appearances, and according to his own testimony, in complete health. And yet, despite many such recorded cases, I was assured that Panticosa and its springs are but

very partially known, even among the faculty at Madrid.

Before attempting, however, to describe the position of Panticosa, the difficulties to be surmounted in reaching it, and the accommodations it offers to any invalids who may be tempted to try the power of the waters,—the order of time and place requires that I should give you some account of a visit we paid the Monastery of San Juan de la Peña. Much as we needed rest during the two days which we were to spend, as I said in my last letter, at Jaca, we could not refrain from devoting the second of them to this excursion.

The convent of San Juan de la Peña—St. John of the Peak, that is to say,—is a remarkable spot, both naturally and historically. The plain lying around the city of Jaca, which once constituted a little Moorish kingdom of that name, is entirely shut in by lofty mountains,—to the north by the main chain of the Pyrenees, and to the south by a range of subordinate, but still very considerable hills, richly covered with wood, and rising into very picturesquely shaped peaks. Situated on one of the most remarkable summits of this latter range, at a distance of some four hours of mountain mule-path from Jaca, are the remains of *two* convents, as is often the case in similar positions, —the one the original hermitage, awe-inspiring from its strange and savage site, venerable from

its remote antiquity, and hallowed to the popular mind by the miraculous legends of its foundation,—the second, the vastly enlarged and splendid habitation of the fraternity at a later day, built when the convent had grown too rich on the credit of its old sanctity and asceticism to be any longer content with the scant accommodation and rude situation of the original house. Both are now hastening to decay, with every prospect of the more recent building being the first to arrive at entire dissolution. This latter occupies, at San Juan de la Peña, a wide and smiling turfy plateau, surrounded by a forest of pines, thickened with a luxuriant undergrowth of box and holly. The convent has long since been secularized; and nearly the whole of its vast buildings are in a state of premature and unpicturesque dilapidation. Enormous cloisters, two separate quadrangles, huge masses of dwellings, a large church, all built of brick, without any pretension to architectural beauty, are still standing, for the most part with their roofs on, but untenanted and well nigh abandoned.

One priest, formerly one of the brethren of the convent, has been permitted to continue in the building, and to say a daily mass in the church. Of course, the strange position and fate of this last solitary monk of San Juan struck our imaginations not a little. We had pictured to ourselves some magnificently silver-locked and

flowing-bearded octagenarian, whose step might probably be often heard pacing at midnight the long, desolate corridors, and whom we should most likely find sitting on the tombstone of some former abbot, in deep, pensive meditation on his departed brethren, and the days which were gone. But it is not altogether in such wise that the solitary of San Juan presented himself to our observation. On riding out from the cover of the forest on to the open turf which surrounds the convent, we espied an individual, in a sort of long black great coat and slouched broad-brimmed white felt hat, lying at his length on his back in the shade thrown over the soft turf by a huge gable, and snoring most majestically. He started to his feet as we neared him; and different as the apparition was from that which our fancy had anticipated, it was impossible to doubt that the jolly red-faced, and comfortably portly gentleman who cheerily saluted us, and begged us to come into his dwelling and partake of such fare as he could offer in the absence of his maid,—gone into Jaca for the day—was in truth that last monk of the convent "left blooming alone"—very unmistakably blooming—whom we had wisely chosen to figure to ourselves under so different an aspect. A pretty little child, and some half-dozen cats, were the only members of his family that we found at home when we entered the corner of the immense

pile which he had chosen for his habitation. Nevertheless, he bestirred himself to set such refreshment as he could lay his hands on before us; and seemed quite determined to have a little talk before accompanying us to the older convent. The more recent building, as may be gathered from what I have already said, has nothing beyond the beauty of its site to interest a visitor: —and we were in a hurry to be off to the original storied spot where the first Roman mass ever said in Spain was celebrated. It was impossible, however, to accomplish this before satisfying our host's eager inquiries respecting the progress and prospects of the Catholic faith in England, and the nature and particularities of cock-fighting as practised there. He had been taught to believe that the complete restoration of our island to the Church of Rome from an apostacy which he attributed wholly to the evil influence of that daughter of Satan, "Anna Bolena," was very shortly to be expected. And he took infinite delight in comparing the cock-fighting, which he considered as our national and indispensable amusement, to the bull-fights of Spain, —much in the tone that an inhabitant of Brobdignag might use in discussing the curious ways of the Lilliputians.

At length he arose to lead us to the spot miraculously pointed out as the site of the original convent, by the suspension of a hunter and his

horse over an abyss down which they must have plunged but for this supernatural intervention. The story is an often recurring one; but the position of this cradle of the Arragonese Church is truly unique. Ordinarily, in such cases of mountain monasteries, the older and ruder building is the upper one. The reverse, however, is the case at San Juan. Our guide led us by a well-cut path through the forest on the mountain side, descending gradually from the sunny open meadow occupied by the modern convent on the summit, till suddenly, at a turn, we found ourselves in front of a most singular semi-circular wall of rock, almost in the shape of a horse-shoe. The height of this perpendicular cliff may be from three to four hundred feet, and its material is a hard reddish pudding-stone. Above, around, and below, all is forest; but this curved red wall is quite naked. At its foot, a few yards of level ground intervene before the mountain side again dips, not perpendicularly as above, but at as rapid a declivity as is compatible with the growth of forest. These few feet would by no means have been sufficient for the buildings which exist in this gloomy spot; but at the deepest part of the curved recess, at the foot of the rock, is a huge cavern; and it is almost wholly within this that the buildings of the convent have been erected. Besides other edifices, there is a charming little cloister, with round highly orna-

mental Romanesque arches, and quaintly sculptured capitals. This is completely roofed over by the naked red pudding-stone of the cavern projecting almost horizontally above it. A small strip of blue sky is seen across the mouth of the cavern, which thus admits a dim faint light. There is also a large chamber similarly vaulted over, and similarly lighted, containing the tombs of a considerable number of early Arragonese nobles and prelates. A variety of curious arms and symbols are carved on the stones which shut them into the rock. In a small inner chamber, still within the cavern, but vaulted over, are the sepulchres of the early kings of Arragon,—Sanchos, Ramirez, and Pedros—in long array. This chamber and its contents have been recently "beautified," churchwarden fashion. New tombstones have been served out to all the royal remains, of a tidy uniform pattern, with their names, and those of their wives, inscribed thereon, in bran-new gilt letters, and every one is fitted into his place in the wall of the building as exactly and neatly as so many drawers in a cabinet. By a strange oversight, however, whether from carelessness or ignorance, the "churchwarden of this parish," whoever he may have been, has omitted to add any dates to his inscriptions. The restorers of this ancient sepulchral chamber, however, have added two objects of modern art, which make it ungrateful to find fault with their

care. These are two statues, about half the size of life, placed on the altar, which occupies one end of the vault! One represents Christ on the Cross, and the other St. John. They are both of great beauty, and of a very high order of merit; and were executed for this place by a Genoese artist, whose name the worthy priest, our guide, could not tell me. There is also a figure of the Virgin,—but of very inferior merit.

On quitting the convent, we bethought ourselves of executing a commission intrusted to us by the Spanish ladies who had been our fellow-travellers from Saragossa. This was, that we would bring them back from a certain cave near the convent a pebble a-piece, picked from the pudding-stone rock, of which the mountain is in great part formed. These stones, it seems, are of sovereign efficacy in childbirth. I must confess, that the faith of our fair Andalusian friend in the virtue of the charm appeared to be of a very slender kind. But the Saragossan lady believed in it most religiously; and assured us very earnestly, that the following case occurred within her own knowledge at Saragossa. A certain ady lying in imminent danger, her husband was in the utmost distress,—when a female friend came running to the house with a stone from San Juan de la Peña. The mode of using the remedy is, to immerse the pebble in water, and administer the liquid to the sufferer. But in

this case, the husband, in his agitation and hurry, so gave the potion to his dying wife, that she swallowed stone and all. The result, however, was at the same time most satisfactory and most wonderful—for immediate relief ensued; a fine infant was shortly born, and—in its clenched hand was found the miraculous stone. How could I account for this otherwise than on the supposition of supernatural agency? The argument was triumphant. At all events, it was easier to promise one of the coveted stones than to attempt a refutation—and as useful. So, the pebbles were duly gathered, and presented to the fair devotees.

On the morrow of our return from San Juan, our little cavalcade—if, indeed, a string of mules may be so termed—once again set forth. The ride from Jaca to Panticosa requires eleven or twelve hours, exclusive of the time given to the mid-day halt. This was fixed at Biescas, a village at the foot of the defile by which the Gallego comes forth from the mountains into the plain. Our route thus far was not very interesting. But the remainder, which followed the course of that river up to the cataract in which it leaps from the bosom of the glacier immediately above the baths, passes through scenery of a very high order. The path is by no means dangerous, though in places a little difficult,—and sufficiently trying to weak nerves unused to

anything of the sort, to keep the Saragossan lady in tears of terror for much of the distance. It must be borne in mind, however, that many mountain paths which a Swiss guide would not dream of calling difficult even, are very much so, and often really dangerous in Spain. In the one case the men are active, intelligent, and conscious of responsibility; the horses are good, and admirably trained to the work, and the tackle—a very important part of the matter—is sound. In Spain, on the other hand, the guides are negligent, stupid, and careless, the cattle generally good for little, and the tackle always good for nothing. The vaunted never-failing sure-footedness of the mule is not to be too much relied on. Two have fallen under me between Saragossa and this place, and a third under another of the party. It is true, they generally pick themselves up more cleverly than a horse does;—but this is a consolation scarcely applicable to a fall in a bad place. Even on the French side of the Pyrenees, the guides consider places bad enough to make a lady dismount which would be thought nothing of in Switzerland.

Rarely have travellers in a civilized land arrived at their destination with so keen a perception of the blessings of decent bed and board as we did at Panticosa. Good mutton and potatoes, with knives and forks, and a clean tablecloth, for supper! Soft, clean beds to stretch

our aching backs on! Here was luxury to have turned Diogenes' self into an epicurean. We went to bed feeling as if we should surely remain there a week. It was not very late, however, the next morning, before the "good drowsiness" had sufficiently done its restorative office to make us ready to get up and look about us. A more desolate scene than that which surrounds the baths of Panticosa it is impossible to conceive. All wood, and with it most of the beauty of the scenery, ceases before the traveller reaches this high valley,—more than 5,000 feet above the level of the sea. At the spot where the baths stand, at the head of the valley, there is a small lake formed by the cascades which, five or six in number, come tumbling down the mountain sides to form the infant Gallego. Around this the granite precipices rise on all sides, save that of the narrow entrance by which the path enters from the lower valley. The produce of the country, to speak statistically, is granite, water, and trout. A north wind was blowing strongly during the first days of our stay there, and the cold was so sharp as to make it seem a very strange place of resort for consumptive patients. Little or nothing has been done for the amusement or luxury—English visitors would probably say—or even for the comfort of invalids resorting here. The bedroom accommodations consist of a clean bed, a deal table, a wash-hand basin, jug and

glass, a cupboard, and some half-a-dozen rush chairs, all good and clean. The board consists of a small cup of chocolate and a morsel of bread, Spanish-wise, in your room in the morning, a plain but cleanly-served dinner in the "comedor"—*i. e. Salle à manger*—at one, and a similar but rather lighter meal at 8 p.m. The charge for this are three francs for the bed-room, plus one franc for each person sleeping in it. The rooms are comfortably large enough for two; who are thus charged two francs and a half each. This appears an outrageous price to Spaniards. But when the nature of the locality, and the difficulty of transporting things thither are taken into consideration, it is cheap enough. The board is five francs a day. Doubtless, extra payment might procure the food to be served in private,—but it is very doubtful whether any extra comfort would arise from this. Certainly, better food could not be had; for the public table is served with the best there is. Every bedstead in the establishment was brought hither on mules' backs over the very difficult pass—eight hours—from Cauteretz in France. It may be easily supposed, therefore, that any of the more cumbrous comforts or elegancies of social life—such as a pianoforte, for instance—would be vainly expected here. You might as well ask for Aladdin's lamp at once as for a carpet or a curtain. It is right, however, to add, that we are assured the north

wind rarely blows,—and that, when it does not, the climate is mild.

The shortest way to reach the baths of Panticosa is from Cauteretz—a ride of eight hours. But it is extremely difficult to ascertain whether this route ought to be recommended to ladies or not. I had fully determined on returning with my wife by this pass into France. But the master of the establishment at Panticosa, an apparently intelligent and athletic man in middle life, told me that he had often passed, but did so no more because he feared the danger. This has decided me to take the pass by Sallent to Eaux Chaudes in France—a ride, I am told, of little or no difficulty, of about ten hours. The *ride* might be shortened to eight by going to Eaux Chaudes from the village of Gabas, in a carriage. We shall, however, ride to Eaux Chaudes—and that ere many days be passed. For Panticosa is, in truth, soon seen sufficiently to gratify the curiosity of the most inquiring.

LETTER XXVII.

Bayonne.

BAYONNE is, in many respects, an exceptional and peculiar place,—a town, *sui generis*, with a local colouring and characteristics which, in these days of universal assimilation and rubbing down of all the world to a polished surface, stand out with a relief calculated to interest a stranger in a manner rarely met with in the highly civilized central parts of Europe. It is, in the first place, the capital in some sort—at all events, the principal city—of the small district inhabited by the French Basques. It is true, that Bayonne is not the place where the manners and peculiarities of this primitive and sequestered race may best be studied. It is too large and important a city to be wholly theirs. Like Brest, in the midst of a purely Breton population, its town influences have forced it on in advance of the district around it,—have mingled a large portion of strangers with its primitive inhabitants, and have contributed other elements to the completion of its character and physiognomy. Yet,

most of what meets the stranger's ear or eye is more or less coloured with the Basque element, and the result is highly favourable to the picturesque charm of the whole. Then, in the next place, neighbouring Spain imparts a strong tint to the picture, and renders it infinitely more interesting to the northern stranger; who here, for the first time, comes into veritable contact with that people, whose comparative isolation contributes powerfully to invest them with much that is romantic and strange to our imaginations. Lastly, the exclusively French element itself at Bayonne has, from the circumstances of its position and pursuits, a character and physiognomy of its own, which distinguish it from the generality of French provincial towns. It is wholly and extraordinarily unpolitical. During all the agitations which have recently shaken France throughout her whole length and breadth, Bayonne was perhaps the only town of any importance which remained altogether unmoved by the tempest. Possibly the Bayonnais take but little interest in the concerns of their own government, because their prosperity in a great degree depends on the measures of that of another country. A modification of the Spanish tariff would probably cause a greater amount of interest, and give rise to more hopes and fears at Bayonne, than a change of the French dynasty or the inauguration of a new Constitution at Paris.

But the commerce of Bayonne—its acknowledged commerce, that is, which is recorded in official returns, and may be read in statistical tables—is far from being what it was; or is at least of a different kind from what it was. From a depôt, it has become merely a place of transit. Some twenty or thirty years ago the Spanish trader rarely crossed the Adour. He came to Bayonne to make his purchases; and that system of trade of course raised up a class of wealthy merchants in the town. With increased and increasing facilities for intercourse and locomotion, these habits have been abandoned — and the Spaniards now for the most part make their purchases directly of the manufacturer or producer.

One most important branch, however, of the trade carried on by Bayonne flourishes as vigorously as ever, nor will her most profitable occupation be gone till the Spanish Government shall become sufficiently enlightened to modify very considerably the benighted barbarisms of its commercial code. The result of its present system of *protection* is, to crush all trade save that of the "contrabandista;"—whose pursuit the Government still further promotes and assists by so miserably underpaying its innumerable army of *douaniers* as to make it almost absolutely necessary to their existence to eke out their insufficient salary by accepting any and every bribe offered to them. Besides, where is the

Spaniard who, if paid by one party to act and by the other to do nothing, would hesitate to accept the service of the latter? Under these circumstances, the various products of English and French industry are introduced into Spain *à l'aimable*,—the former principally by Gibraltar, and the latter by the Pyrenean frontier,—in the most regularly irregular manner possible. The only results of the Spanish prohibitory tariff are, to demoralize all engaged in the traffic, to ruin the legal trader, to drain the revenue by paying a vast army to protect and collect dues which it does not get, to enhance the price of goods to the consumer, and to deprive the country of all those civilizing influences which a large legitimate commercial intercourse with France and England would not fail to impart.

It occurred to me once, some months since, to fall in with a large band of smugglers among the hills; and I was much struck by the extensive scale on which their transactions were evidently carried on, and by the air of business-like regularity which characterized their proceedings. It was at the Case de Broussette, a lone house situated in the romantic valley of the same name, very near the frontier line immediately behind the "Pic du Midi de Pau." The band must have consisted of not less than from thirty to forty men, and nearly as many mules and mountain ponies. They were coming from France,

and were about to smuggle into Spain the incredibly numerous and voluminous bales and cases of goods which were strewed on the ground around the building on all sides. On the present occasion they had nothing to fear from the French authorities. This Case de Broussette was the last halting-place in their laborious passage across the mountains, before entering Spain. Accordingly, here the various packages were to be arranged and distributed in the most favourable manner; the men were to be recruited with refreshments and rest, and the proper hour for their purpose was to be awaited. It was a busy and striking scene amid the desolate solitude of those mountains; picturesque and strange enough, but as far as possible from realizing the home-spun imaginings of terrible contrabandista gangs whom it would be highly dangerous to surprise in their lair, and who would probably murder a wandering tourist by mistake, before finding out that he was not a custom-house spy. The busy crowd, who looked up from their work for an instant to give a cheerful "good-day" to us and our guides, did not appear one whit more dangerous than a somewhat similarly, and not more peaceably though more legitimately, occupied gang of porters in Thames Street. Nor do I conceive that any portion of their expedition was likely to lead them to assume a more belligerent attitude; for I had seen their official enemies a few hours before on the other side of the frontier.

They consisted of some half-dozen or so of disgracefully ragged, filthy, and emaciated looking soldiers; who seemed scarcely to have sufficient energy or force left in them to drag their sauntering limbs about, or to quarrel over their filth-obliterated cards, as they played under the foot of a sunny wall. I should think that the whole party would have sold their very souls for a Napoleon;—a sum which certainly judicious Monmouth Street would not have offered for their united wardrobes.

The introduction of Spanish goods into France is a more arduous affair; and some of the mountain paths resorted to by those engaged in the traffic, for the purpose of avoiding the French revenue officers, are really tremendous. I, who boast a tolerably steady eye and hand, with some difficulty clambered, by dint of hands and knees, with panting lungs, over passes by which these men travel laden with heavy burdens. But that all their boldness and activity are not always a match for the French revenue officers is sufficiently evidenced by the advertisements frequently to be seen affixed to the doors of the public offices in Bayonne announcing sales of wool, tobacco, silk, &c., seized by the custom-house officers. The contraband exports from Spain are, however, very insignificant in amount in comparison with the quantity of French goods which find their way into the Peninsula.

The more picturesque and exciting scenes of

contrabandista life and adventure pass and may be witnessed among the mountains. But the smuggling trade as it may be studied at Bayonne, presents not a few "facts and figures" of a rather surprising character. The traffic may be divided into three classes. The first and most primitive is that in which a smuggler or band of smugglers purchases goods, carries them across the mountains, and sells them as best it can. But the profits of the business were so large that a higher and more wealthy class of traders were anxious to secure a portion of them; and thus, as in all other descriptions of industry, capital, which could afford to "sit at home at ease," has managed to appropriate the largest share of the gains, while the active smuggler is left to "brave the battle and the breeze" for a stipulated hire. The "battle" is rarely, if ever, other than with the elements; but none the less for that is it often a fight involving very serious danger to life and limb. This is the second phase of the contraband trade. But the progressive "division of labour" has introduced a still further improvement in the facilities and conveniences of the business. A class of middle-men have sprung up,—who act as a sort of smuggling brokers. The merchant applies to one of these, who guarantees the delivery of the goods in question to a certain consignee in Spain for a certain consideration. This middle-man is in connexion with the band of smugglers, knows them well,

knows how far he can trust not only their integrity but their solvency in case of loss; for, many of the active heads of bands are men of considerable property, who can, and do, make good any loss accruing from weather, seizure, or other causes, to goods in their hands. If this risk is not borne by the smuggler, of course his rate of remuneration is less. The principal part of the contraband trade is now carried on in this last manner; and the certainty and regularity with which its operations are conducted is, to a hater of custom-houses and their laws, delightful to witness. There is *nothing* which a Bayonne contraband broker will not undertake to pass into Spain. No difficulty of bulk or weight alarms him,—and his tariff of charges is infinitely lower than could be expected.

Bayonne is not in any degree what the French call a "*ville monumentale.*" It possesses very few visible and tangible memorials of the past. The most interesting and important passages in its history have been warlike,—and war is not wont to leave traces which mankind look with pleasure on, after it has passed. Yet the Englishman, whose pleasurable emotions can be excited by reminiscences calculated to bring afresh home to his mind the conviction that he belongs to the strongest, most vigorous, most energetic and indomitable race of men which the crossings and minglings of the world's breeds have yet pro-

duced, will not look unmoved from the heights occupied by the storied citadel of Bayonne.

As a mere *point de vue*, the spot is a magnificently fine one. Bayonne is situated at the point where the Nive falls into the larger stream of the Adour. Both rivers flow from the eastward, in such a manner as to make the eastern angle at the point of junction a very acute one. On the narrow strip thus inclosed between the rivers, and on the southern bank of the Nive above the juncture, and of the Adour below it, the city is built. The portion situated between the two streams is the smaller, and is called "Petit Bayonne." On the northern bank of the Adour, which divides the department of the "Basses Pyrenees" from that of the "Landes," is the town of St. Esprit,—a faubourg, in fact, of Bayonne, although possessing a mayor, &c. of its own. Rising above St. Esprit, on the north, is the high ground occupied by the citadel; which thus magnificently commands both towns, as well as the course of the river and the port. Immediately below the town, the Adour swells into a truly majestic estuary; exhibiting, especially at high tide, an extent of water more like a lake than a river. This is lined on the southern bank by a handsome plantation of trees, the promenade of the town; a most delightful and lovely walk, nearly a mile long,—and the great pride and "*délices*" of the Bayonnais, who would not ex-

change their "Allées Marines" for any town walk in the universe.

From the citadel, then, the eye has immediately beneath it, first, the city, with its picturesque little Gothic cathedral,—built by the English, of course, as all the churches of any note in this part of France are, or profess to be,—then the port, with its shipping, a beggarly account enough in a statistical return, but abundantly sufficient for the purposes of the picturesque,—the noble expanse of the Adour, with its wood-lined banks, and farther off the dark masses of the vast pine forests, towards the mouth of the river, to the westward,—the villa covered hills which surround the city, to the eastward,—and, grandest feature of all, the magnificent snow-topped range of the French and Spanish Pyrenees bounding the prospect to the south.

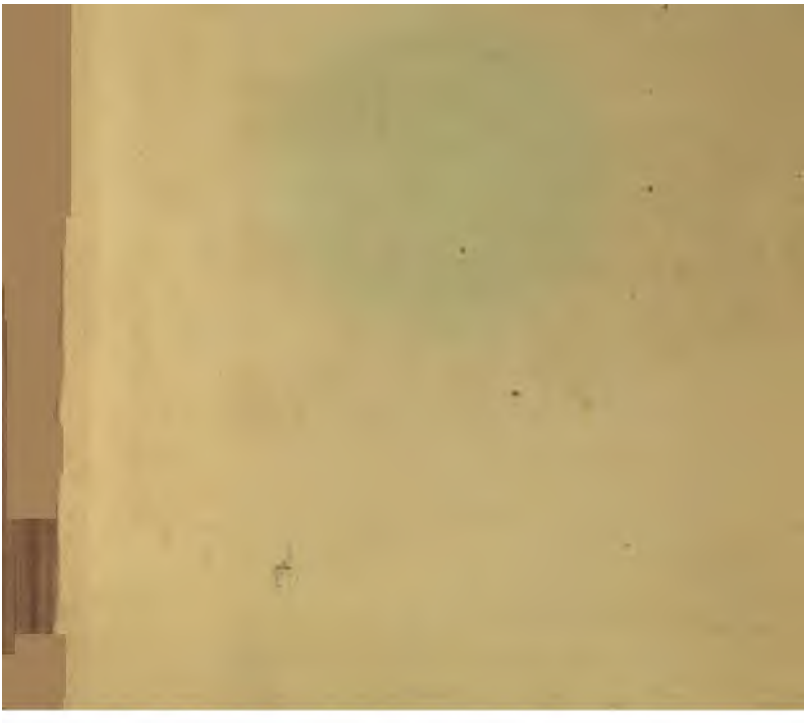
The delight of all this beauty is for the eye of every visitor who can appreciate it. But to the Englishman, proud of his country's military glories, almost every foot of the ground around and beneath him "has a charm beyond" the mere physical beauty of the scene. For him, each knoll and hollow, and some of the distant mountain peaks, are re-peopled with a very different crowd of actors from those which meet the outer eye.

In the evening I went to the theatre, expecting to see all the *beau monde* of Bayonne there. But in this I was disappointed. The entertain-

ment was the opera of "La Chaste Suzanne,"—a version of the scriptural story, of which it is difficult to say whether the profanity, the indecency, or the stupidity, is most prominent. I was given to understand that the announcement of it had frightened the decent and decorous provincials; and truly they did greater credit to their good taste than did the more advanced Parisians, who dubbed the opera a successful one. Yes! the good Bayonnais were right in letting "La Chaste Suzanne" present herself to empty benches. Strangely enough, considering the nature of the performance, several of the few parties who occupied the boxes were Jews. They are very numerous at Bayonne, and are among the most wealthy of the population. Most of the best boxes in the pretty little theatre were pointed out to me as permanently rented by Jewish families. Up to 1831 no Jew was permitted to reside in Bayonne. They were tolerated only in the faubourg of St. Esprit, to which they were compelled to retire at sundown. A further lapse of years may perhaps witness the still more complete emancipation of admitting them to the society of their Christian fellow-townsmen:—a privilege which is not yet accorded to them.

THE END.

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